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A Special volume on Environmental Aesthetics

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Editorial

Environmental aesthetics is not just another school or movement in aesthetical thinking and scholarship like idealist aesthetics, Marxist aesthetics, modernist aesthetics, Frankfurt School aesthetics and so on; nor does it refer to any national or cultural boundaries such as Indian aesthetics, Arabic aesthetics or Italian aestheties. Environmental aesthetics, on the other hand, is an aesthetical treatment of environment as a whole that includes the given one called nature as also its various modifications, re-organisations and changes made by man. It is composed of both the "real estate", i.e., soil etc. as well as of "goods and chattels", i.e., buildings, plants and animals. Environment, in its broadest sense, now-a-days covers almost all the means of human activities and behaviour such as social, political, religious and cultural systems and performances exhibited in all the varieties of art forms and scientific inventions. So we use expressions like cultural/religious/scientific/intellectual environments. Similarly, one can use the expression aesthetical environment. But what exactly is environmental aesthetics?

Aesthetics is traditionally defined as metacriticism (M.C. Beardsley), a body of writings which formulate theoretical principles about general problems of different individual arts. If art is a man-made object, even by manipulating the materials of the given nature such as clay, stone, wood, colour and sound, then art in both its Greek and Latin derivatives (*techni* and *ars*) means an aritifact or artificial object as opposed to the given nature or environment. Obviously, then, aesthetics of environment or environmental aesthetics sounds self-contradictory. Although art has been defined as an *imitation* of nature, it has always been treated as superior to nature during the post-Platonic era continuing for more than two millennia—from Aristotle to Marcel Duchamp. Nature is left to its own fate. But imitations of nature excepting the ones in the architectural structures which cannot be accommodated within a man-made building, are carefully preserved in the museums. Keats' "Greecian Urn" is a bride unravished by time not so much for its beauty as for its being carefully preserved. Many more beautiful things in nature are destroyed by the same nature everyday. Man's sense of beauty is selfishly confined only to his own creations. If he is a *homo aestheticus* (an aesthetic animal) he must take equal care of the beauties of nature. Instead, he has been deliberately destroying nature for his material purposes in the name of technological enrichment of human culture. But random destruction of nature has now caused severe damage to the environment as a whole, as a result of which the horrifying environmental pollution has threatened the human survival itself. Hence this awakenment: Nature is the primordial art form. Its beauty must be appreciated and preserved. Environment is not something only external to human life. "Environment...is the natural process as people live it, *however* , they live it. Environment is nature experienced, nature lived" (Berleant) and environmental aesthetics is:

The aesthetics of the real world. In this the environment means all of the observer's external world: the natural environment, the cultural environment and the constructed environment. The opposite is the aesthetics of the imaginary world of the arts. The boundary between these two worlds of course is not fixed. Buildings, gardens, sculptures etc. are part of our environment as works of art. Works of art *as physical objects* belong to environmental aesthetics, but, of course, as *aesthetic objects* too they exist permanently as drawings and models, as score-like directions for realization and performance; as parts of the environment, they only last for a certain time.

__ Yrjo Sepanmaa, *The Beauty of Environment*, (P.17)

A. C. S.

Sacred Environments

ARNOLD BERLEANT

It may seem unusual to introduce the sacred into a discussion of aesthetics the one presumably dealing with ultimacies and the other with appearances, although a certain resemblance of religious to aesthetic experience has occasionally been remarked on. Perhaps it is more plausible to consider the sacred when exploring aesthetic values in environment, for every culture consecrates certain places, such as houses of worship, tombs, and by extension, national monuments and memorial buildings. Even so, "sacred" still seems an unlikely term to apply to environment, for an environment, as we have seen, is less a place than a situation, less a location than a context. Convention, however, has no monopoly on meaning but rests only on general agreement about the significance of a term, when such agreement exists. And the authority of convention depend only on the extent of agreement, not truth. Given the approach to environment, it is not surprising to suggest that, convention notwithstanding, such notions require re-thinking—environment no less than place, sacred no less than aesthetic.

To the extent that a philosophical inquiry can be empirical, let us begin by considering four cases, each representing a particular type of sacred environment. Together they will provide the grounds for a more general understanding of the environmental experience and meaning of the sacred.

Four sacred environments

The first of these kinds of sacred environment centers on an object, in this case Brancusi's *Endless Column,* a large outdoor sculpture in Tirgu Jiu, Rumania. Set in a circular grass plaza, the column is constructed of geometrical steel modules piled far into the sky to a height of nearly a hundred feet. Brancusi had used that relatively simple modular form for the pedestals of far smaller sculptures, yet magnifying its size and duplicating its pattern in a high vertical sequence transformed the shape. The *Endless Column* is no slender shaft but a series of large units, each the height of a person and nearly as broad. The pedestal has become a sculpture in its own right, a great soaring column that emanates extraordinary force, charging the surrounding space and enveloping the onlooker.

This is true of every good sculpture, to be sure, but the power of the *Endless Column* is remarkable. Looking upward from its base, the column is true to its name, appearing to dwindle into infinite space. Moreover, on entering the sculpture's field of force, the viewer's position and movement seem to affect the work, causing it to bend and twist in ways that have a reciprocal physical impact on the body of the onlooker. As one moves toward the column, the sculpture seems to tilt away, its elongated mass leaning precipitously backward. As one backs off, the pitch of the column changes, its great bulk bending

forward at an increasingly threatening angle. As the viewer walks around the sculpture, the column appears to twist and spiral upward, its geometrical facets alternately reflecting light or obscured in shadow. Not only does the sculpture's force generate the space around and charge it with energy, but the work magnetizes the viewer into a powerful dynamic relation with it. A new order has been created that joins sculpture with the human body.

A different type of sacred environment occurs in an interior space, in this case the Rothko Chapel in Houston, Texas. Visiting the chapel takes on the character of a pilgrimage, since it is an unobtrusive structure hidden on a college campus in a residential neighborhood some distance from the center of the city. When the chapel is finally located, one enters a forecourt, a small rectangular plaza dominated by the steel form of Barnett Newman's "Broken Obelisk" set in a reflecting pool. Poised inverted, tip to tip above a pyramidal base, the truncated obelisk extends a profound reception to the visitor. As the pool reflects the planes of the sculpture, its precarious balance seems to extend that moment of equipoise to eternity. Yet as one walks around the pool, both the object and its reflection change, creating a magical mobility that resembles the dynamic movement of the *Endless Column,* and producing, as a result, a dialectic of permanence and change. Meditation thus begins even before entering the chapel.

The small, low doorway into the chapel leads to a wide but shallow antechamber, at each end of which is a modest opening into the inner, main chamber. The chapel itself is a simple octagonal space containing fourteen large, somber, almost monochromatic gray canvases, four wooden benches facing the largest walls, and three meditation cushions. Natural light comes from a large center skylight and is diffused by a reflecting panel beneath. Some visitors are disappointed by the low key, understated interior; others are overwhelmed. A mere description cannot convey the peculiar force of this environment. It does not possess the architectural grandeur of a cathedral or the religiosity of a church. The sacredness of the chapel lies in the experience rather than the place. A quiet energy emanates from Rothko's art in this setting, filling the chapel ad suffusing the enclosed space with a force profound and powerful. Its strength may be felt to so overwhelming a degree that some, on entering the chapel, find themselves weeping uncontrollably. Such art posseses an ontological dimension, joining with person and place to create a world of the sacred.

Yet another kind of sacred environment encompasses an open space. Jefferson Rock, near Harper's Ferry, West Virginia, is a great boulder atop a lofty prominence overlooking the smooth outlines of the low surrounding mountains. Far below lies the silver surface of the confluence of the Shenandoah and Potomac Rivers. The Rock offers a striking vantage point from which to view the landscape in all directions. Here Thomas Jefferson once stood in wonder, and many both before and after him have come to admire the same scene. This dramatic experience of space is unusual for the way in which the viewer's presence gives the great expanse coherence and a center. Wallace Stevens, the American metaphysical poet of the twentieth century, offered a metaphorical description of such a situation in the "Anecdote of the Jar:"

> I placed a jar in Tennessee,
> And round it was, upon a hill.

It made the slovenly wilderness
Surround that hill.

The wilderness rose up to it,
And sprawled around, no longer wild.
The jar was round upon the ground
And tall and of a port in air.

It took dominion everywhere.
The jar was gray and bare.
It did not give of bird or bush,
Like nothing else in Tennessee.[1]

What makes the view from Jefferson Rock so extraordinary is not any sense of power that may come from dominating the scene, the feeling mountain climbers report on achieving a summit. It is rather the awareness of being at the heart of an immense space and the source of its coherence. One stands at the center of a world that radiates outward. Although at a great height, the viewer is still not above and beyond the scene but is part of an immense universe which he or she orders and is enfolded within. Instead of feeling pride at so powerful a position, the viewer is characteristically overtaken by a deep sense of humility. Perhaps this comes from being encompassed by such greatness, perhaps from recognizing how small and vulnerable a part of the world one truly is. In this form of sacred environment, the human presence creates and orders space on a cosmic scale, while at the same time being dependent on and integrated in it as, on the microcosmic level, a nucleus is in its cell.

The final kind of sacred environment does not involve a relation with a particular object or place but centers on an experience of a dynamic and integrative character. This form of sacredness is perhaps more modest than the others, and its occasions may be more familiar and even common: strolling through a Japanese garden, paddling down a quiet stream, walking along an unfamiliar woodland trail rich in detail, perhaps even driving at a leisurely rate along a scenic country road in the first green of spring. Moving through an evocative landscape, rich with interest and detail, the scene may be absorbing but is still incomplete: It requires our thoughts, associations, knowledge, and responses. If an active interpenetration of person and place develops, a fusion may emerge that depends on our personal contribution, on how we activate the environment by engaging with its features and bringing them into meaningful juxtaposition with our memories and associations. When this fusion occurs with focus and intensity, it may become the peculiar, charmed experience we associate with the sacred. And because its quality lies in an extraordinary experience rather than an extraordinary place, this last leads us to find the sacred in many environmental situations. Yet what is it that makes them sacred?

What makes an environment sacred?

While it is useful to identify these different types of sacred environments, and there are surely still others, it is important to recognize that they refer not to kinds of places but rather to different settings of experience. They make clear that these places, without the human presence, are not sacred nor are they even environments, for an environment results from the fusion of person and place. Nor at the same time is the experience of such an environment simply an internal occurrence. Rather, such places succeed because they encourage active physical and perceptual engagement. Is there anything common to these kinds of environments that leads us to find them sacred?

A characteristic that appears both in the experience of art and in sacred environments is the sense that the occasion has a distinct and special significance so focused as to make it unique. One is, as it were, centered during that time, perceiving things with enhanced acuteness and concentration. This is sometimes described as a magical moment in which the world has become intensely vivid. One experiences a personal relation to the place, a relation so close as to intimately engage one's thoughts, one's attention, one's body, one's senses. A powerful feeling of connectedness displaces the protective distance we so usually impose between ourselves and the places we encounter, a distance not only physical but psychological. This is sometimes cultivated in art as the "psychical distance" thought necessary for appreciation, but in art as in environment it sacrifices the direct bond of engagement in order to focus on a object. Moreover is a false exchange, since perceiver and object are not discrete and separate but mutually supportive. Particularly in environment one has the sense of being taken up, of being immersed in the situation, engaged in a total, binding condition. And at its most intense degree such a situation evokes an aura of reverence. The very air seems hushed and charged: The environment has become sacred. This condition has a curious corollary in the transformation that takes place in the self. The sense of being disparate and detached diminishes and even vanishes, and the participant becomes inseparable from the place and the occasion.

The four examples cited at the outset are forceful instances of other, perhaps less rare sacred environments: the sight of a brilliant sunset modulating dramatically before one's yes into decline and oblivion; the breathtaking extension of space in the panoramic view from the top of a high hill; the fragile floridity of a crabapple in full bloom; the landscape after a fresh snowfall; a walk in a city park whose details, volumes, and spaces welcome us; even a room in our home that evokes a quality of personal intimacy and belonging.

While we can consider the sacred from the standpoint of the participant's experience, we can also approach it from the conditions of such experience. Many features characterize a sacred environment, most general of all the strong sense of value that pervades the situation. Sometimes the historical significance of a place may put one in a reflective, reverential mood, receptive to associations with earlier personages, inhabitants, or events whose aura still lingers. The features of the place, indeed its very ground, possess for those who enter a sense of importance, a preciousness in themselves. We experience the space as charged, intense with its own energy, not static but active. Such a space possesses a mag-

netic attraction, drawing us into its power and encouraging us to reciprocate by rapt attention and perhaps by movement. The conditions of the sacred develop a continuity with those who participate in it and become absorbed and integrated into the space.

These ideas resemble the native North American understanding of human life in nature that we considered earlier. Many of these tribal societies express views that are at their base religious in character. We may too readily dismiss as primitive animism the sense that all creatures, things, and places have a spiritual character. Yet as our environment deteriorates, responsible governments and individuals are beginning to question the narrow faith in the technological domination of nature. This has led many to reconsider this ancient view and to recognize the profound insight such an idea embodies. We have begun to rediscover the preciousness of land, water, and air as a result of the often irrecoverable harm done to our environment by small interests and short-term objectives. For environment is socially created and almost always common to many inhabitants, so any damage to it has social as well as physical effects. The native American grasp of the sacredness of the land is, the, not a case of primitive piety but a deep and inescapable insight.

Implications of sacred environments

Grasping the nature of sacred environments carries with it some curious consequences. Such environments, such events, tell us something about what environment, all environment, is. Not a place but an occasion, it is the world we experience. This makes the difference between environment and place clearer. A place is a physical location which we can enter and occupy. It is objectively there, impersonal and self-sufficient, and a person who approaches and penetrates its distinct and separate. We can describe places in impersonal terms because they do not depend on a human presence, for any such presence is merely contingent and irrelevant. An environment is different. It is more than surroundings, as environments are usually construed, more even than a relation with surroundings. An environment is rather a continuity of person and place, a situation that is more than the sum of its parts but a distinct, complete, and integral whole. This is intimated in what is sometimes called a sense of place, that is, place that has the special, binding quality we are ascribing here to environment.

Recognizing their differences also helps us distinguish between a sacred environment and a sacred place. A sacred place is a location that is honored, institutionally valued, such as a cathedral, a synagogue, a temple, a sacred grove, a memorial. Its value presumably rests in itself, quite independent of anyone who visits it. A sacred environment, on the other hand, is one which engages and binds us as participants, with a force and intensity that result in the kind of powerful occasion described earlier. Sacred places are sacred by decree. They may evoke the kind of intense engagement that would transform them into environments, but again they may not, and then they become only formal objects of ritualized veneration and indifferent feeling.

Understanding the character of a sacred environment has yet another implication, one whose significance is far-reaching. Because a sacred environment exemplifies environment most intensely, it also tells us something about how environment can fail. We can see this best by distinguishing the sacred from the profane. The profane is a desecration of

place, even more, a desecration of environment. It involves an action that removes the sacredness of an environment by destroying the binding unity of person and place. Examples are all too common: eliminating living neighborhoods to make way for freeways, razing historic structures that give character and quality to a district in order to erect a monumentally impersonal office towers, displacing the grand homes on older streets near the center of cities with a line of dull commercial structures, flattening and paving the green spaces surrounding cities into prosaic malls, channeling streams in urban areas underground or hiding them between concrete embankments.

The dictionary defines 'to profane' as "serving to debase or defile what is holy."[3] Yet in some sense, is not all land holy land? Atoning for such profanation, to continue the theological metaphor, means becoming reconciled, literally making what has been profaned "atone." And in this case, that is making a failed environment sacred again. Furthermore, human activity can not only desecrate a place but destroy the very possibility of environmental engagement, the very possibility of sacredness. Yet as people can profane environment, so they can atone for such desecration by reviving the possibility of environmental unity. Capable of destroying environment, we may also be able to re-create it.

Environments so powerful as to be sacred may seem unusual, far from the ordinary run of experience. We are accustomed to observing the sacred on special occasions under prescribed conditions and carefully choreographed rituals. While this may be customary, it is not necessary. In fact, because it isolates the sacred, it allows violence to be perpetrated on the rest of our world. If only special places and rare environments are sacred, then the balance of the human world becomes disvalued and a ready victim to desecration. Yet the native North Americans had a different sense of things, one that can guide us here. For them a power inheres in every object and place, be it stone, tree, lake, or sky. All must be treated with respect and reverence. A religious view of nature means that all nature is one's cathedral and worshipis the usual attitude. The Jews's blessing before eating bread and the Christians' grace before meals are similar forms of reverential behavior that introduce the sacred into the mundane. Indeed, it does not demean the holy by sanctifying ordinary life but rather raises its value to the level of the sacred. No sharp division, in fact, separates sacred from ordinary environments, for these are not opposites. There is rather a continuity between them, since value suffuses all environment. Any environment can become sacred and any environment can be profaned. And all are capable of degrees.

We have spoken of the sublime, and at least as a positive characteristic of environment it seems to resemble the sacred. Both are experienced as possessing intense value. Both surpass the feeling of separateness and evoke an occasion that is overwhelming in its absorption. Both may involve natural occurrences of remarkable moment. Yet at least in its traditional signification, the sublime differs markedly from the sacred in other ways. The sublime is a feeling generated by contemplating an object—a thunderous waterfall or the starry heavens above, whereas the sacred is an experience evoked in a situation, from a religious ritual or a musical performance to a meditative stroll a Chinese temple garden. Traditionally, the sublime also differs from the sacred in being essentially dualistic or at least by building on the contrast between an overpowering object and the perceiver's re-

sponse to it. Historically and conceptually it rests on the opposition of subject and object. The sacred, on the other hand, is a fusion, all the more overpowering in not being localized or centered.

But even when the sublime is freed from these traditional constraints and is conjoined with the perceiver, either positively or negatively, in aesthetic engagement, it remains different in character from the sacred. The sense of overpowering magnitude that identifies the sublime, power so immense as to render the human presence puny and insignificant, does not occur in the experience of the sacred. Here is neither intimidation nor fear but rather a sense of being expanded and uplifted, rendered precious through the radiance of the sacred. The fearsome thrill of the sublime if replaced by the warm suffusion of affirmation, perhaps joyful, perhaps tearful, but always positive. The sublime may be either positive or negative. The sacred, on the other hand, is always positive; the profane is its negation.

A parallel has sometimes been drawn between aesthetic and religious experience. Both are intensely absorbing, personal, and immediate. Both extend their directness and intimacy to bring one into a region of being that far exceeds the private region attributed to subjectivity. While this discussion of the sacred in environment is only tangentially related to the religious and
important differences remain, the aesthetic and the sacred share yet another characteristic: Both have moral as well as aesthetic dimensions.

As in the experience of art, aesthetic value suffuses the sacred environment. Its aesthetic value may lie in its beauty or in its sublimity. Certainly both art and environment share our vivid perceptual interest. At the same time, the qualitative experience they generate not only has immediate value but effects that extend beyond the perceptual present. Experiencing an environment as sacred may change our sense of the world and affect how we live and act. To regard the world as sacred and everything that is part of it as inherently valuable can change our decisions and alter our actions. It can also sensitize us to the profanation of the world and render unacceptable practices that we formerly ignored or acquiesced in unthinkingly. Recognizing and conserving environmental values, then, takes on ethical import and becomes a moral obligation. Moreover, there is a social interest in sacred environments and, if all environments are potentially sacred, in every environment, just as there is a social interest in great art. As one can claim that the "owner" of such art has a moral obligation to preserve and share it, so one can hold similarly that everyone who participates in any way in an environment has an interest in it and an obligation toward it. In environment, as in art, possession is never absolute; one is always answerable for one's treatment of it. Because moral and aesthetic value appear to some degree in all environments, they both place an obligation on us individually and socially.

Sacred environments may develop, then, from the space generated by a radiant object, in an enclosed space charged with value, in open space made coherent through the human presence, through the dynamic interdependence of an active perceiver and an environmental order, and in still other forms. Moreover, since such environments are often not set apart from the ordinary course of experience, we can no longer regard them as rare and

different. And because environments are sacred in varying degrees, our participating presence both contributes to their sacredness and influences its extent. In so far as this confers a god-like power on humans, it confers on us an equally powerful obligation.

Although we may have begun by thinking of environment as a special, limited notion, these explorations have shown that it encompasses the entire human realm. In the process, the idea of environment has not lost meaning or clarity; rather it has gained in reasonance and value. Developing the idea has also expanded the reality, for we have ended by sacralizing the world and the human participation that is inseparable from it. The very grandeur of this conception of environment testifies to the value of its successes, the tragedy of its failures, and the endless richness of its possibilities.

Notes and References

1. The first quotation is from "Theory". It and "The Anecdote of the Jar" were published in Harmonium (New York: Knopf, 1950)
2. See the discussion of body and environment in Chapter 8 of my book *living in the Landscape Towards and Aesthetics of Environment* (forthcoming 1997)
3. *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary* (Springfield, MA: Mer-riam Webster, 1986), p.939/1.

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The Concept of Landscape

T. J. DIFFEY

I

At first sight the concept of landscape seems to be used in three main ways:(1) to designate certain areas, not always precisely bounded, of the earth's surface ; (2) to designate a certain kind of painting ; (3) in combination with other concepts, as when we speak of landscape gardens or landscape gardening. Two points about the idea of landscape immediately strike me : first, the concept applies to art and to real things, that is , it covers the first two uses just identified; and secondly, certain of the cognate terms which we use for landscape seem archaic, obsolete or literary, that is, conspicuously vulnerable to historical change of one sort or another.

"Landscape"(1), as designating an area, is a geographical concept. Under this we think of such things as the making of the landscape, that is, of how to explain changes over time in the appearance of a certain tract of land or terrain . Such matters as the geological causes or morphology of landscape forms are relevant here— for example, what precisely characterizes a desert landscape or how the geological properties of limestone determine karst-type scenery,&C.

On reflection : (1) seems capable of further refinement. We might value the appearance or look of a certain area without thinking about it much geographical detail. Here we are appreciating the land in question aesthetically. Landscape may be a work of art or it may be a real thing : the distinction caught by the difference between (1) and (2). But a landscape painting is only available to be appreciated aesthetically, whereas in the case of a real landscape painting is only available to be appreciated aesthetically, whereas in the case of a real landscape we do not have to think of it aesthetically. we may, for example, know a lot about the geography of a particular landscape without being very much interested in how it looks . Young geographers, We are told, want satisfactory scientific results from the study of landscape—the remedy, they discovered, lay in mathematics and statistics; [1] though, as I shall suggest, if something is recognized by the public as a landscape (as opposed to its merely figuring in geography textbooks for the purpose of analysis as landscape) that does imply that the territory in question is of aesthetic interest.

The concept of landscape is by no means a simple one but has some complicated ramifications. For example, I can employ landscape gardeners to do something about the untidy and littered land surrounding my new suburban semi, but when they have turned the mess into lawns ,rockeries, flower beds and may be have even added a fountain or a little pond, it would be pretentious of me to describe the results as a landscape gardeners whilst

I was indoors reading or writing on the aesthetics of landscape. The term "landscape garden"seems to be reserved for the large-scale achivements of say Stowe or Stourhead, whereas "landscape gardener" is a term in use for work done in every town and suburb and not only reserved for those who design or work on grand gardens.[2]

"Landscape"is a concept, then, that seems to weave in and out of the arts at one extreme designating painting, at the other natural scenery. Other concepts in this region have this same double feature—for example "scenery"itself, where we may be speaking of the look of some terrain outdoors or, on the contrary, of what is firmly indoors, such as the scenery on the wings of a theatre stage. But then again theatres themselves may be outdoors,particularly in hot dry countries such as Greece—and an outdoor theatre may or may not dispense with "scenery"on its stage. Moreover, outdoor theatres themselves may range from being striking artificial creations, that is, grand works of architecture, to natural features where a hollow place or some similar feature need scarcely be adapted from what nature has provided ready made. thus a pageant in a local village near my home makes use of a natural formation, a fern-clad hill, from which St Margaret descends to open the proceedings by addressing the audience seated at its base.

I've mentioned "scenery"which of course we need to distinguish from "scene"and "scenic", though they are obviously interconnected in meaning and all often used in defining "landscape". for "scenery"the Oxford English Dictionary gives, among other definitions:

(3) The general appearance of a place and its natural features, regarded from the picturesque point of view; the aggregate of picturesque features in a landscape.

(4) A landscape or view; a picturesque scene; also, the pictorial representation of a landscape. Now *rare*.

For "scene"the OED gives, among other definitions:

[with reference to the theatre]

(6) The material apparatus, consisting chiefly of painted hangings, slides, etc. set at the back and sides of the stage, and intended to give the illusion of a real view of the *local* in which the action of the play takes place. . .

(9) A view or picture presented to the eye (or to the mind) of a place, concourse, incident, series of actions or events. . . .

And for "scenic"the OED gives, among other definitions:

(3) Of or belonging to natural scenery. In recent use: Abounding in fine scenery, affording landscape views.

(4) With reference to painting or sculpture: Representing a "scene"or incident in which several persons are concerned.

II

I am inclined to stress the distinction between a real landscape and a landscape painting, but it has to be confessed that most people, at any rate many writers on landscape, don't seem overly concerned about the difference. On the contrary, much writing on land-

scape is indifferent to whether it is painting or the real thing that is under consideration. Whereas I am inclined to dramatize the distinction between real landscapes and landscape pictures, probably under the influence of all those accounts in recent aesthetics which emphasize the gulf between a work of art and "the real world", Appletion, for example, judging by his practice in his book *The Experiance of Landscape*, sees nothing of any significance to give us pause in the difference between a work of art and real things. Rather, using the same analytical framework throughout, he passes seamlessly from chapters discussing landscapes in the several arts to discussions on the aesthetic potential of real places.

The modernist doctrine, however, is that the work of art calls attention to itself as art, artefact, fiction, so that knowing we are dealing with a work of art, and not with something which we have been deceived or even make believed into thinking confronts us directly, such as a piece of nature or a drama in human lives, enters centrally into what it is to experience the work of art.This idea seems to have left landscape studies untouched, where the opposite idea seems to prevail. Thus even when a landscape *painting* is ostensibly the subject of interest, the fact that it is a painting is easily discounted in favour of attention to the subject depicted in it by the painter—so interest is as readily, if not more, engaged by, say, Dedham Vale, the Stour valley on the Suffolk/Essex border, as it is by Constable's rendering of it. And tours of Hardy's Wessex are booming business these days, where this means not reading the books but joining a coach or walking tour, or at any rate joining the tour after reading the works, as if, contrary to modernist doctrine, the work of art were not enough, sufficient or autonomous unto itself. I mean by these remarks to suggest that Appleton, and I take him only as and for an example, subjects real and painted landscapes indifferently to his prospect/refuge analysis of landscape and for these purposes doesn't seem to think a painted landscape introduces relevent considerations not present in the real thing. Likewise we zoom in and out of regarding Hardy's Wessex now as a real place, now as an imaginary place. In his January 1895 preface to *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* (1891), Thomas Hardy says: " In the present edition it may be well to state, in response to inquires from readers interested in landscape, prehistoric antiquities, and especially old English architecture, that the description of these backgrounds in this and its companion novels has been done from the real". Thus we easily lapse into talking of how Marlott has changed since Tess's day. On the other hand, Hardy, somewhere I seem to recall (though I have been unable to locate the reference), speaks of Wessex as partly a dream and imagined landscape. If so, I would suspect this as the ruse of a crafty old fox to prevent us from unearthing the real places buried under the imaginative prose.

I remember myself when looking at photographs of landscapes in topographical books enjoying them as a substitute window on landscapes that alas I was not then seeing, but thanks to the arousal of my curiosity by the photographs, intended to visit at the first opportunity. But these books sometimes also included reproductions of landscape paintings, e.g., by Paul Nash, as well as landscape photographs, and I recall, before my consciousness of the art nature of art had been developed by too much aesthetics, criticism and art history, trying to discount what, thanks to Gombrich, Wollheim & Co, I would now conceptualize as the particular painter's stylistic treatment of the scene in question, in order

to get at the landscape as it would be in itself without the irrelevent distractions of art, when finally I got round to seeing it for myself. According to this philistine approach of my youth, artifying a scene by painting it (why wouldn't a photograph be sufficient?) would be comparable to the Chelsea and Kensington bridge gentrifying an artisan dwelling or peasant cottage. One seeks to discount their efforts in order to imagine what the original had looked like.

The standard line is of course to compliment the artists for allowing us to see with their eyes what we would not otherwise see; without them, it is sometimes said, we would not have landscapes. landscapes are the inventions of artists. But the extent to which we can *now* forget the difference between landscape as painting and landscape as the real thing is the extent to which we regard landscape as perfectly within our own competence to see, unaided by any art. I may need a Rembrandt to bring out the significance of human faces for me and teach me to read a human character (though I've got some doubts about what the casual order is here) but the view from the hill I can manage for myself. Against this, the standard line, of course is that I would not even know that the hill afforded a view, had not the artists discovered what views were and taught me to see them. But even if it were true that without the artists humankind would know nothing of landscape, given that landscape has been discovered, how dependent am I now on the artists for what I see when I take some panoramic tour ? Incidentally the OED entry for "panorama"tells us the name was invented by R.Barker, c 1789 and means :

(1) A picture of a landscape or other scene, either arranged on the inside of a cylindrical surface round the spectator as a centre (a *cyclorama*) or unrolled or unfolded and made to pass before him, so as to show the various parts in succession.

(2) An unbroken view of the whole surrounding region.

Again notice the double duty the word " panorama" does : it may mean an artefact or a real scene. "Panoroma", however, is not cross-referred to under the entry for "landscape"in the OED.

III

What does seem beyond dispute is that the painterly senese of "landscape"came first, came, that is, before the sense of "landscape"as applied to a "real place". The Oxford English Dictionary entry for "*Landscape*" notes various forms, including "landskip":
"The word was intrduced" , it says, "as a technical term of painters ; the corrupt form in — ["landskip"] was according to our quote a few years earlier than the more correct form".
Meaning for "landscape"offered by the Dictionary are :

(1) A picture representing natural inland scenery, as distinguished from a sea picture, portrait, etc. [Earliest use listed, 1603]

(2) A view or prospect of natural inland scenery, such as can be taken in at a glance from one point of view, a piece of country scenery.

(3) In generalized sense (from 1 and 2) : Inland natural scenery or its representation in painting.

(4) In various obsolete transf. and fig. uses.

(a) A view, prospect of something.

(b) A distant prospect; a vista.

(c) The object of one's gaze. [This is an interesting one in view of the interest recently shown in notation of the gaze in feminism and film theory.]

(d) A sketch, adumbration, outline ; *occas.* a faint or shadowy representation.

(e) A compendium, epitome.

(f) A bird's -eye view : a plan, sketch, map.

(g) The depiction or description of something in words.

Then the Dictionary entry, that "landscape"developed as a term within art discourse, therefore any tendency to apply the term to a tract of nature in apparent innocence or independence of arts is a subsequent development though an explicable one. If the term began life designating that which represents nature, it is not difficult to see how the term also came to denote what was represented by the representation, namely nature, and to ignore as it were the fact of the representational medium itself.

Why are so many terms to do with landscape obsolete, archaic or literary? This is not obvious in the case of "landscape" itself, so long as we avoid the more poetic (I was tempeted to say Miltonic) "landskip", but does become apparent when we look at some of the cognate terms : for example, "prospect"or "vista".

For "prospect"the OED gives, among other definitions :

a look out, view, ...

(b) A place which affords an open and extensive view, a look-out.

(2) An extensive or commanding sight or view; the view of the landscape afforded by any position.

(3) That which is looked at or seen any place or point of view; a spectacle, a scene; the visible scene or landscape.

(b) A vista; a long, wide, straight street; an avenue of houses ..... [St Petersburg]

(5) A pictorial representation of a scene or the like; a view, a picture, a sketch.

The explanation one may hazard why the language of "landscape"is so visible to the ravages of history is that landscape was importantly bound up with the way of life of one particular social class at a particular time and place, namely the English (*sic*) upper classes of the eighteenth century. We are no longer (if many of us ever were in the class of) gentlemen in possession of our own vistas and prospects. Social and historical change has taken its toll. Landscape then was associated with wealth. leisure and aristocracy particularly in the eighteenth century.

But my hypothesis is a fragile one and my hazard risky. Landscape may have reached its apotheosis in the eighteenth century. But Kenneth Clark in his book, *Landscape into Art*, takes a wider view: "The landscape of fact", he says, "is a bourgeois form of art"

[3] in which seventeenth-century Holland was the great epoch. And coming forward in time, while in the literal sense eighteenth century aristocrats landscaped their parks, such landscaping lived on in vestigal form in the people's municipal parks of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. I would insist too that the leisure now associated with landscape is not aristocratic but is that of mass tourism, in which indeed landscape plays an important part. Byron is followed to Sounion by we tourists in our coaches doing the highlights of Greece in a few days. More generally, a taste for landscape rests on a certain freedom form material want. Nan Fairbrother says in her *New Lives, New Landscapes* that liking for mountains is in direct proportion to the comfort of urban living. "The seventeenth century was not yet comfortable enough for mountains to come into their own. Horace Walpole is the typical early admirer of rugged prospects, for the eighteenth century was beginning to provide both the easy life essential for contrast and necessary roads for coach journeys to remote areas" [4] And Kenneth Clark observes that to the mediaevals, the fields, that is , nature , "meant nothing but hard work (today's agricultural labourers", he adds, "are almost the only class of the community who are not enthusiastic about natural beauty)" . [I don't know how he knows this.]

IV

It is an unfortunate fact that between the writing of *Outlines of a Philosophy of Art* and *The Principles of Art* R. G. Collingwood changed his mind in one respect for the worse. In the earlier book he offered an account of natural beauty. [6] Not only has this disappeared from the later book, but *The Principles of Art* leaves no logical space for any account of natural beauty. But now Collingwood, like the heartiest of Hegelians, is identifying aesthetics with the philosophy of art, which unsurprisingly but not trivially takes no interest in natural beauty.

In this paper, however, I want to consider not his account of natural beauty but another point which Collingwood makes in *Outlines.* Sibley is famous for his account of aesthetic concepts [7] in which he distinguished two broad groups of remarks that may be made about works of art— first, remarks that may be made by anyone with normal eyes, ears and intelligence, for example, a poem is "tightly - knit", "this picture lacks balance", certain characters "never really come to life "or an episode "strikes a false note". "Unified", "balanced", "integrated", "serene", "sombre", "dynamic", "powerful", "vivid", "delicate", "moving", "trite", "sentimental", "tragic", and such terms feature in the remarks which spring to mind under this division. Sibley calls such terms aesthetic terms or aesthetic concepts. There is an earlier and lesser known attempt than Sibley's in aesthetics to draw a related distinction. In *Outlines* Collingwood says :

> Certain predicates attached to works of art are intended and taken as implying a judgement on their aesthetic quality; others are not. If we call a work of art sublime or idyllic, or lyrical, or romantic, or graceful, we mean to call attention to something in the character of the work itself, and what we say about it amounts to praise or blame of the artist as such. On the other hand, if we call it a seascape or a villanelle or a fugue we are attaching to it a

predicate with no aesthetic significance whatever, and we are therefore neither praising nor blaming it (*Outlines* 31)

Whereas Sibley's examples of non-aesthetic remarks are of description of the representational content of a work of art, Collingwood's are of genre concepts. Presumably Collingwood is continuing here the Crocean tradition of rejecting genre concepts as lacking aesthetic significance. This is a mistake, since while "this is a novel", "this is a romance, are certainly not *ascriptions* of aesthetic qualities or properties, nevertheless the correct application of these concepts supports or determines appropriate aesthetic ascriptions, that is, assists in directing our attention to the perception of aesthetic qualities appropriate to the work thus approached. Thus it is important in approaching the so-called novels of John Cowper Powys to remember that they are romances which, if approached in the frame of expectations formed by the reading of realist or naturalistic, will inevitably lead to misunderstandings and disappointments.[8]

Collingwood's Crocean assumption, then, that e. g. "fugue"is merely a classificatory concept of no aesthetic interest overlooks the fact that such classifications affect the manner in which we approach something aesthetically, so the difference between one genre concept and another is not one only of convenience or of interest to say, librarians alone.

One of Collingwood's examples of a term of no aesthetic interest is "seascape". He would , I assume, argue the same for "landscape", so that to describe a work of art as landscape painting is not to make an aesthetic remark about it. According to this line of argument , "landscape"is a predicate of no aesthetic significance. I do not deny the strict truth of this, but again, as in the case of the [other] genre concepts already mentioned, it is relevent to the aesthetic we take in a landscape painting that we should know that it is a landscape painting we are looking at. Of course it might be asked how, standing before a Gainsborough or a Claude, could we fail to know this. How could we miss so obvious a fact that it is a landscape painting here that is engaging our interest ? Now that landscape is a fully accepted and indeed beloved art form it may be obvious that when we are looking at a landscape painting we must know that this is what we are doing, but this was not always so. While the genre was developing and making its way against opposition, all sorts of inappropriate demands stood in the way of appreciting landscape paintings; when it was expecetd for example, that paintings should be of heroic or historical subjects, such demands had to be contested and pushed aside. Kenneth Clark observes that in spite of classical traditions and the unanimous opposition of theorists, landscape painting became an independent art.[9] Michelangelo, for example, "saw quite clearly that landscape was inimical to this ideal art; and he also saw that it was a Flemish invention".[10] So what to us is the obvious commonsense fact that such a painting is a landscape painting is an inherited convention. It does not follow , moreover, that because something is an obvious fact it has no bearing on our aestheic discrimination.

More importantly, there is, I believe, an interesting difference between calling a *painting* a landscape, which as Collingwood says is not an aesthetic ascription, though recognition of it, I suggest, is important for appropriate aesthetic ascriptions, and calling a

piece of *territory* or *terrain* a landscape. I wish, then, to acknowledge that it has particular aesthetic significance. "Landscape"and cognate terms such as "view", "prospect", "scenery"are already aesthetic in meaning, whereas the nondescript territory I may drive through on my way to the beach is neither prospect nor view nor landscape.

In other words, so far as natural beauty, though not art, is concerned, we are already responding aesthetically when we identify some segment of nature *as a landscape.* More accurately, in that something, e.g. the Wye Valley, has been recognized as landscape, it has been identified as of particular aesthetic interest. "Landscape", I am suggesting , functions intransitively as an aesthetic identifier term. Admittedly, as in the case of genres according to the Crocean account, the fact that something is a well-known landscape does not of itself *entail though* it does *promise* (in the manner of a Gricean implication) that the visitor to it will get an aesthetically rewarding experience. "Landscape"applied to real terrain, I am suggesting then, is an aesthetic concept not in Sibley's sense but in the sense that in regarding a piece of terrain as a landscape one has thereby singled out that territory as suitable for aesthetic attention. On the other hand, to say that "landscape" is an aesthetic concept in Sibley's sense, which I am *not* claiming, would be to say that, in calling something a landscape, I am drawing attention to a particular aesthetic quality— but no one wishes to say that. For to adapt one of Sibley's arguments, if I tell you that something is a landscape, you will not be able to infer from that what its aesthetic character is, whether dramatic, restrained, menacing, charming, &C. On the other hand, it *is* a consequence of my view that propositions such as "this landscape is of no aesthetic interest", "nobody finds this landscape aesthetically interesting", are, or amount to, self-contradictions.

My suggestion that the identification of an area as a landscape means the aesthetic qualities of certain tracts of countryside have been recognized, are familiar and well known, is intended to draw a distinction between tracts of territory where this is the case and tracts where it is not. Thus the Wye Valley is a landscape but the Lea Valley is not (or was not when I was last in that part of outer London — but it could easily have been developed as a landscape, that is, in this case physically landscape, since then). The South Downs is a well-known landscape but the countryside fringes of some of the neighbouring towns enjoy no such reputation; no one visits them for their aesthetic interest since they do not enjoy or command designation as landscape. In other words, some bits of physical terrain, e.g. in England, have been singled out or privileged as landscapes, while much of its terrain has not.

V

There is an interesting difference between "landscape"and "seascape". "Landscape"is equivocal as between a geographical location and a picture whereas a seascape can only be a picture, a sea picture. "Seascape", that is, seems by analogy only to be instantiated in (2) (the second main use of the concept of landscape which we identified at the beginning), namely a ceratin kind or form of painting, and is not used for the real thing, a portion of the sea. I'am not aware , that is, that visitors seek out to admire particular portions of the surface of the ocean that have received the prior accolade of "seascape", in

the expectation of enjoying certain aesthetic experiences, as they seek out particular portions of the earth's land surface, designated landscapes. But this is a mere contingency. There seems to be no philosophical or conceptual reason why there should not be physical seascapes as there are physical landscapes. For all I know, there may already be boating trips on certain seas to enjoy their aesthetic qualities, say the colour of the water, a kind of extension to coastal boating trips, say to the Blue Grotto in Capri. I'm not sufficiently experienced in seafaring to be sure but there seems to be no difficulty in principle why tracts of the sea could not be appreciated aesthetically. One ocean or portion of it can have a different aesthetic look from another. This is obvious in extreme cases such as the arctic Ocean. Indeed the whole point about seascapes (in the paintaing sense of course) is that painters can capture aesthetic differences which we assume are there to be seen or which can be seen if we take to voyaging across the seas rather than through art galleries. One of the main differences, however, between landscapes and seascapes, when we are speking "for real"as opposed to speaking of paintings, is that landscapes will display many more morphological features and structures than the sea and so will offer a wider range of aesthetic rewards.

But as things are, no portions of the sea have been privileged, then, as seascapes, so "seascape"unlike "landscape"is not what I have called an aesthetic indicator term. Collingwood is right, moreover, that seascape, meaning a kind of painting, is not a concept of aesthetic significance, though again a kind for other genre concepts, provide appropriate aesthetic or orientation on how to look at certain pictures, namely pictures of the sea.

There are many variants of "landscape"besides "seascape" : the term "townscape" for example. This seems to be more often in use for the real thing than for paintings of views of towns, though again there is no reason why we should not speak of certain drawings and paintings as "townscapes". And a poem such as Wordsworth's sonnet "Composed upon Westminster Bridge" is a townscape (or cityscape) not in a painting but in a poem. As Passmore takes pleasure in pointing out, this poem about a view of city from the pen of our leading nature poet is not itself a nature poem.[11]

We can think too of other "scape phenomena"of aesthetic interest in a double sense, that as captured in paintings and as seen "in the real". Take for example cloudscapes, whether as seen *in* paintings by Constable or seen *as* Constable and other painters have taught us to see them, particularly those dramatically dominating the visual field above the horizon, for example the clouds seen above the flat countryside of East Anglia or the Netherlands, or in this age of air travel, clouds which are seen from a position above them, that is, when we look down from an aircraft to the clouds below spread out like vast snowfields, where no human foot can tread.

The aesthetics of landscape is complicated then by the double sense I have identified. Whatever the historical origins of the case, it is now possible to love what I have called real landscapes without being interested in art, and possible to love landscape paintings without venturing out of doors very often to take a look for oneself at the real thing. Of course, it is possible to love both and I suppose, though I find it difficult to imagine, to care for neither. The question this duality for me is whether a unified aesthetics can or should

deal with both categories of landscape or whether there are, as I have hinted but not developed here, significant aesthetic differences to be acknoweledged and understood in our approaches to art and to, what by way of finishing, I shall provocatively call, nature.

Notes and References

1. Jay Appleton, *The Experience of Landscape* (Chichester: John Wiley, 1975), P.9.
2. William Morris has a nice example in Chaapter 3 of *News from Nowhere* (various editions available). William Guest deplores as philistine the work of landscape gardeners in the nineteenth century in (or is it on?) Epping Forest. "I was very much shocked then to see how it was built-over and altered; and the other day we heard that the philistines were going to landscape-garden it". In the same chapter, incidentally, Dick tells Bob the Weaver that he does not want to " go into your the new science of aesthetics".
3. Kenneth Clark, *Landscape into Art* (1949; Penguin Books, 1956), p.43.
4. Nan Fairbrother, *New Lives, New Landscapes* (Architectural Press, 1970; edition used: Penguin Books, 1972), p.142.
5. Kenneth Clark, *Landscape into Art* (1949; Penguin Books, 1956), p.18.
6. "The Beauty of Nature" appears as Chapter 3 of Collingwood's *Outlines.....*(London: Oxford University Press, 1925).
7. F.N. Sibley, "Aesthetic Concepts", *Philosophical Review* lxviii (1959), pp. 421-50.
8. This is only an example and like most things in aesthetics is controversial. A book has just been advertised in the *Times Literary Supplement* (TLS) (No 4866; 5 July 1996, p. 31) which aims to deny the distinction between novels adromances. The adverstisement, for Margaret Anne Doody's *True Story of the Novel*, published by Rutgers University Press, runs: "Wonderful and truly revolutionary. With fascinating detail Doody obliterates the arbitrary distinction between the Novel and Romances."
9. Kenneth Clark, *Landscape into Art* (1949; Penguin Books, 1956), p.16.
10. Kenneth Clark, *Landscape into Art* (1949; Penguin Books, 1956), p.40.
11. John Passmore, *Man's Responsibility for Nature: Ecological Problems and Western Traditions* (London: Duckworth, 1980), p.109.

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Art, Life, and Human Nature*

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Why have people everywhere made and valued the arts ? I will approach this question by using what may seem, especially to readers of a journal of aesthetics, a surprising or even peculiar perspective — that of ethology. As the scientific study of animal behaviour, ethology considers humans as a species which, like others, has evolved and has a specifiable "nature". I claim that art (or "the arts") is part of human nature.

I choose ethology, rather than contemporary philosophy, anthropology, or psychology, because it allows for both universal predilections and cultural variation. It tries to understand humans as they adapted to, or were shaped by, their surroundings, thus embedding them within nature. Moreover, it provides an embracing view of humanity, as a species, that seems to me an essential one to hold in an interdependent and multicultural world.

Western aesthetic theories, especially as they have developed after the Enlightenment, have been primarily concerned with "fine art," and heavily embued with philosophical assumptions that separate mind and body, categorize or compartmentalize knowledge, and advocate a disinterested appreciative attitude toward "works" of art. Such assumptions, however, do not transfer well to non Western arts or even nonelite art of the West. Anthropology of art, like cultural anthropology in general, for most of this century has distanced itself from looking for universals (such as a universal art impulse), and has considered art solely as a product of culture, different from society to society and even from individual to individual. Psychology of art has been oriented either experimentally or psychoanalytically. In the former case, interest is on what aesthetic *preferences* people have (e.g., for certain proportions, or shapes, or colors, or musical consonances). Although such studies are interesting, they do not address the broader implications of what *art* is or what it contributes to people's lives that has made it everywhere so important. While psychoanalysis is concerned with universals, it remains, in my opinion, too Western in its various orientations to account for all of human art. Freudians, for example, view of art as a symptom of a lack or, at best, as therapeutic — as sublimation, compensation, projection, regression, or repressed fantasy; Jungians consider art more positively, but as a means of individuation; object-relations theorists see art as arising, like play, as a "transitional object ," again a means to creative separation or individuation.

If individuals in all societies DO practice or engage with the arts in some way, which does seem to be the case, then one can adopt an ethological point of view and hypothesize that there is a universal, evolved tendency in human beings, underlying their individual differences and particular cultures, to make and value arts. Although its manifes-

* This essay is adapted from a lecture presented in November 1994 to the Centre for Human Ecology, University of Edinburgh.

tations will differ, the underlying impulse (or psychobiological mechanism) would have come about and been retained (or "selected for ") because of its contribution to survival.

Other fairly obvious behavioral universals come to mind. For example, it seems evident that while African babies are carried on their mothers' backs in wrappers, Navajo babies are swaddled on cradleboards, and British babies are alike in having a need for developing and sustaining a predictable social relationship with their caretakers and tendencies to behave in ways that will assure that these needs will be met (i.e., all over the world, they cry, smile, and otherwise compel their elders to respond to and care them). Crying, smiling, holding the arms out in order to be picked up, and so forth are evolved behaviors, and during human evolution babies that did these things survived better than babies that did not, thus passing on this trait to their offspring.

Similarly, adolescent boys and young men may go out hunting together for game, or raid nearby villages for women and other booty, or be inducted into the armed forces and fight in wars, or play team sports, or form neighbourhood gangs — but all seem to have an easily encouraged behavioral tendency to join and bond with other males in groups in order to perform dangerous and exciting physical activities together.

As a convinced Darwinist who considers that human behaviour has evolved, just like human anatomy and physiology, I have attempted in my work to show that art, like infant attachment and adolescent male bonding, is a universal *behaviour* , part of human nature.[1] This has been a departure from the usual Western art discouse, which has viewed art as *objects* (like paintings, poems, musical scores or performances) or a kind of *essence* that embues objects (thereby making one painting or poem "art" while another painting or poem that lacks that essence — say harmony, or significant form, or unity-in-variety, etc. — is NOT art). In recent times, some have claimed that art is a *label* : thus, whatever curators or critics consider to be art IS art.

But my aim has been to understand what it is that people everywhere do when they "artify"something — that is, when they make or regard something artfully. (The reason that an ethological or biobehavioural approach to art seems strange may simply be that we have no word, at least in any language that I know, for what we do when we make art — so that we think of art as a noun or object, rather than as a verb or activity).

In order to present how I have come to understand art as part of a universally evolved "human nature,"and to show how that nature affects our lives today, I must first introduce a few perhaps unfamiliar elementary evolutionary ideas.

The Environment of Evolutionary Adaptedness

In thinking about the evolution in humans of a behaviour of art, indeed of any behaviour, it is necessary first to be aware of the great length of time during which the features that came to characterize humans were evolving, and second, of the essentially uniform environment in which these features evolved.

As an animal taxon, hominids are quite recent, becoming distinct only about four million years ago. For 39/40 ths of that period, we inhabited essentially the same environment and lived in essentially the same way, as nomadic savannah-dwelling hunter-gatherers

in small groups of twenty-five or so. We think of human history (since the earliest civilizations) as very long, but in the four million year span of our species evolution, Egypt or Harappa occurred too recently for that way of life — in large settled societies — to have made significant changes in our nature.

Rather, beneath the veneer of civilization and cultural diversity is a "bedrock"of fundamental humanness that evolved over 3,900,000 years in an essentially pre-cultural way of life (although, to be sure, it requires a cultural soil in which to take root, develop and bloom). Evolutionary scientists refer to this ancestral environment as the Environment of Evolutionary Adaptedness, or the "EEA" (an abbreviation I will henceforth use). What engaged our mind and senses in the EEA is what still touches us most deeply and continues to inspire our strongest felings. Understanding this helps to explain the adolescent male behavior that I mentioned earlier : it was adaptive in an environment where young active males had to joint together to hunt or kill for the livelihood or defense of their group.

This long view of human evolution implies that the usual non-ethological philosophical and historical views of human existence and their answer to questions about human nature are pitifully (and literally) superficial . I cannot improve on the analogy made by the evolutionary psychologists John Tooby and Leda Cosmides : "[I] n trying to understand the forces that laid down the sediments at the Grand Canyon over millions of years, study of which way the mind is blowing can only contribute so much. They document the explanation of the last 0.02 millimeters of the upper layer , but may lead to entirely incorrect conclusions about the events that created the other three thousand meters of sediment deposition . "[2] That is to say, we misrepresent our human depth to the extent that we regard human history as being only some ten thousand or at most 25-40 thousand years in length (rather than 100 to 400 times longer).

Adopting this way of thinking about human history is like nothing other than substituting a Copernican for a Ptolemaic worldview. It provides a powerful (and in my view fundamental) starting point for social policy makers., educationists, and environmentalists as we look for ways to address the enormous political , social , and environmental difficulties that we face today.

Human Nature

A corollary of the heliocentric or Grand Canyon view of human history is that theirs is an evolved human nature that all members of the species share. Few of us would dispute that our anatomy and physiology have been shaped through evolution by natural selection. We are noticeably different in physical form and function not only from our primate relatives but from our earliest hominid ancestors as well. Walking upright , being relatively hairless , having a flexible wrist and opposable thumb, concealed evoluton and a nine-month gestation period , a specialised vocal tract of speech — these are all physical adaptations that presumably contributed to the survival success of those individuals in the EEA who had them.

It is less well recognized that behaviours too are adaptations. The infant attachment and male bonding that I mention earlier are but two examples. I can mention others :in infancy the strong predispositions to speak and understand language, to make and use tools

, and so imitate and wish to please. Later we join with others in common endeavour, respond to strong leaders form hierarchies of age or strength, actively seek companionship, are suspicious of strangers. Everywhere humans show avoidance or ridicule of the unfamiliar,identification and preferential treatment of kin — especially close relatives. They invest power in those of greater age, ritualize social associations, have ritualized exchange and giftgiving, and make explanatory schemes based on categories and oppositions.

Neural circuitry in the brain involved with motivation and emotion — their expression, direction, and cognitive control — has gradually developed to favour these behavioural characteristics so that individuals who tended to behave in such ways were better adapted to the nomadic, small-group existence of our hunter-gatherer forebears in the 3,990,000 years of the EEA, before the rise of agriculture, cities, writing, and everything else we consider as "civilization "or "human history."

Such a view, of a "common human nature ", implies that almost everything we consider to be "natural "or "right "(e.g., living in a large anonymous society based on a money economy, learning from books in schools, being regulated by calendars and clocks, being socially stratified according to income or class, the requirement to fashion a unique individual self, the importance of questioning and dissent, societal pluralism, sitting for hours looking at a television or computer screen, pushing buttons to do work) is opposed to the way we lived as a species for 99/100 ths of human history. If human behaviour today is dysfunctional so that we are beset by psychological and environmental problems, it is no wonder.

At the end of this essay, I will address some implications for modern life of the "heliocentric "way of thinking about ourselves as a species with a describable common nature. But next I will describe how I consider art as an evolved component of human nature, and add this to the discussion.

"Art"as an Evolved "Behaviour "

When talking about the behavioural components of human nature, it is necessary to understand what is "a behaviour ."It is more accurate to say "behavioural predisposition,"in order to acknowledge that the environment is important to the expression of any evolved behaviour. For example, other more familiar behavioural predispositions (e.g., language, toolmaking and use, infant attachment, aggression, cooperation) all obviously need a facilitating environment in order to be appropriately expressed. A child who does not hear language will not learn to speak; one whose positive expressions of sociality are rebuffed will not learn to be social; one whose aggressive tendencies are encouraged will express aggression differently than if these tendencies had been discouraged. Individuals will also, of course, vary in the strength of behavioral predisposition and ability just as they vary in anatomical and physiological features. Some behavioral predispositions are more or less robust than others, requiring more or less facilitation to enhance or weaken them.

"A behaviour"can be thought of as an overarching psychobiological tendency to behave in a certain way or ways in certain circumstances, with a describable immediate and an ultimate result. For example, in the behaviour of infant attachment that I referred to earlier, a baby will do a number of things (cry, raise the arms to be picked up, move toward.

lean against, crawl upon its mother or other attachment figure) in circumstances of loneliness or uncertainty and fear, with the immediate result of enhancing its survival. In this example, "attachment "is the overarching behavioural tendency : its noticeable manifestations are the individual behaviours I described.

Thus, analogously, I will propose that "art "is an overarching behavioural tendency [to be described], which occurs in certain [to be described] circumstances , with [describable] immediate and ultimate results.

In order to fill in the blanks, it is first necessary to propose a defining feature of "art."Although philosophers of art have pretty much given up searching for an attribute that would define what all examples of art have in common, an evolutionary biologist must propose a behavioural attribute (or mechanism) upon which natural selection could act. Without recapitulaing the steps of my search, which has involved dismissing other definitions or characterizations of art. I will simply state that what I have found to be common to the activity of art of all times and places is a behavioural activity that I have termed "making special."Making special refers to the fact that humans, unlike other animals, intentionally shape, embellish, and otherwise fashion aspects of their ordinary world to make these more than ordinary.

Each of the arts, if one thinks about it, can be viewed as ordinary behaviour made special (or extraordinary). This is easy to see in dance, poetry,and song. In dance, ordinary bodily movements of everyday life are exaggerated, patterned, embellished, repeated — made special. In poetry, the usual syntactic and semantic aspects of everyday spoken language are patterned (by means of rhythmic meter, rhyme, alliteration, assonance), inverted, exaggerated (using special vocabulary and unusual metaphorical analogies) and repeated (e.g., in refrains) —made special. In song, the prosodic (i.e.,intonational and emotional) aspects of everyday language — the ups and downs of pitch, pauses or rests, stresses or accents, crescendoes and diminuendos of dynamics, accelerandos and rallentandos of tempo — are exaggerated (sustained and otherwise emphasized) , patterned, repeated, varied, and so forth — made special. In the visual arts, ordinary objects like the natural body, the natural surroundings, and common artifacts are made special by cultural shaping and elaboration that make them more than ordinary.

I have suggested that we can trace the motivation for a behaviour of making special to the very appropriation from nature of the material conditions of life (food, drink, shelter — what Marx called the "means of subsistence"). Handaxes, spearthrowers, digging sticks, fire, and clothing were the earliest technology, the cultural tools that enabled humans to better control the aspects of nature on which material production depended, so that they could survive.

In the traditional materialist view, art — along with religion, science, and politics — is assigned to the "structure" or "infrastructure " that is dependent on the material subsistence base or "infrastructure."[3] However, I suggest (by using the example of premodern groups that we can observe today) that at some point in human evolution, making special itself became part of the technology of appropriation — that is, means of *enhancement* (making special) were allied to the means of production *in order to make them work more effectively.*

For example, procuring food is, everywhere, crucial. Group members have strong feelings about the success of their venture so that in hunting societies that we know of, "behaviour made special "is as much a part of preparation as readying spears or arrows. Before a hunt, for example, hunters may fast, pray, bathe, and obey food or sex taboos. They may wear special adornment. In addition to sharpening their tools or treating their weapons with poison, they may perform special rites for them or mark them with special symbols. One can say that this control of behaviour and emotions mimics the control necessary to achieve a desired goal. Special practices such as spells or charms may also be carried out during the hunt, and concluding rites after sucess, such as propitiation and appeasement of the prey animal's spirit.

In other words, the appropriation from nature *of* the means of subsistence often includes psychological along with technological components; the "nature" that requires cultural control includes human behavior and feeling as well as the physical environment. Materialist thought is inadequate, I believe, when it does not acknowledge that means of enhancement (i.e., the control of human behavior and emotion outlined above) are frequently if not always intrinsic to the control of the means of production.

These means of enhancement do not necessarily have to be "aesthetic." For example, fasting ,observing taboos, or sacrificing are certainly "special" or extra-ordinary behaviors even though they are not inherently artistic. Yet as extraordinary behaviors meant to serve important ends, they tend to be the occasion for ritual and artistic control and elaboration in word, gesture, and visual presentation.

Indeed, I find it significant that the primary occasion for the arts among humans everywhere is in ritual ceremonies. Ritual ceremonies themselves are extraordinary, outside the daily routine. Although they are "cultural" behaviors that differ from one society to another, they occur in strikingly similar circumstances, times of uncertainty, transitions between one material or social state and other. They are engaged in specifically to bring about desired results . And however else they may be described , ceremonies are also notably occasions for and collections of what we call arts : songs, dances, poetic language, visual display.

I see the original adaptive or selective value of making special, then, as residing in several effects of particular value to human in the EEA.

1. *By making them special , objects and events of possible significance are acknowledged.* Simply acknowledging the importance of possibly significant sources of uncertainty is more advantageous than not doing so. Reinforcing this "ordinary importance" by extraordinary activity —shaping and elaborating the means dealing with it (e.g. , making tools and implements, regularizing vocalizations or movements) — additionally freights the occasion with significance . (And it seems quite evident that making important things special would contribute more to survivorship than enhancig unimportant things , which would be deleterious).

2. *Making special controls anxiety.* The control inherent in making special is therapeutic to individuals in that it provides something to do in uncertain or troubling circum-

stances and gives the psychological illusion (if not always the actual reality) of coping. Indeed, visual art in paleolithic times is found disproportionately in stressful environments,such as harsh northen latitudes where resources availability was unpredictable. [4] Shaped, controlled , non-ordinary behavior helps to relieve anxiety. Not only does rythmic or patterned movements or vocalization in the self or group provides , by analogy, an illusion of control of the external situation, such behavior is more soothing and unifying than "natural" or "ordinary" random , uncoordinated , individual activity . [5]

3.*Making special promotes careful attention to important concerns.* Making special of objects and activities (e.g. , tools, weapons, ceremonies) that have abiding human concern leads to their being treated with care and consideration, thus helping to ensure that they will be successfully achieved. As psychologically-effective ways to enhance the means of production, making special promotes actual success.Groups and individuals who do not bother to enhance the probability of achieving their serious and important concerns will not prosper as well as those that do.

4. *Making special reinforces appropriate knowledge and practice.* By periodically reasserting and invoking special behaviour that recalls earlier occasions of uncertainty, artificial anxiety is created and handled by orienting it toward what at some point will need to be done. Even when not "necessary" or immediately effective, ritual precepts and action reinforce important knowledge and social structure in the group as well as provide to individuals the belief or psychological certainty that their world-view is right and powerful.

5. *Making special promotes group harmony.* By reinforcing individuals, beliefs in group efficacy and group verities, the special behavior in ceremonies contributes to group oneheartedness and cooperation. The structures of ceremonies themselves exemplify cooperation by coordinating individuals in the formal patterns required by singing or moving together. Insofar as ceremonies inculcate group values and promote agreement, cooperaton, cohesiveness, and confidence, they also enhance survival.Working harmoniously in common cause ensures as much as any other human attribute the welfare of individuls.

Thus, a behaviour of art, as I have reconstructed it,or hypothesized ,was evolved in the EEA as *a behavioural tendency to "make special" objects and activities that humans considered to be of critical importance to survival in circumstances of personal or environmental uncertainty. The immediate result was to focus attention on important concerns and to allay anxiety, and the ultimate result was to reinforce appropriate knowledge and practice and promote group harmony* .An evolved tendency or predispositions art in this sense of making special one's abiding concerns is a characteristic feature of human nature that, like other behavioral tendencies, can be enhanced or discouraged by human cultures.

Art and Life

Art and Life in the EEA

My reconstruction of the evolution of a behaviour of art is admittedly speculative.I stand behind it, however, believing that it accounts for the universality and persistence of

the arts in human societies everywhere. I also believe that it addresses more questions about art more comprehensively than other theories.For example, this view of art, and the ethological notion of human nature that frames it, help us to understand the differences between early humans and humans today in their practice of art and their attitudes towards life. We can better appreciate these differences by considering three general "clusters" of universal psychobiological needs that evolved alongside and motivated human behaviour — needs of "hand", "mind", and "heart" . (I use these three general terms as a sort of oversimplified shorthand or capsule summary of a number of interrelated things) .

In the EEA (and in many traditional societies even today), people's lives were "hands -on " — that is lived close to nature : experiencing the natural cycles of the seasons, of planting and harvest, plenty and want. Heat and cold, rain and drought, day and night, work and rest, light and dark were given and immediate. People made things for their own lives from natural materials — leaves, grass, mud, stones. They knew the possibilities of their environment — the plants, animals, water sources, terrains.Sights, sounds, smells all had intimate primary meaning. People used their own agency and energy — their breath, muscles, fingers — to make things happen. They saw and used the results of their actions : houses, clothing ,tools , implements , and the further results of these tools and implements — did the spear work, the basket fray , the plants thrive? Every person made appropriate and useful things toward his or her life, valued his or her own efforts, and knew that others recognized and valued them.

Art (as I have described it above : the need and desire to make special) was also made or performed by each individual in the service of abiding human concerns. As I have also described, the principal evolutionary context for the origin and the development of the arts appears to have been in hands -on activities concerned with survival — appropriating the very material conditions of life (finding food, securing abundance, ensuring fertility of women and of the earth and so forth) and , further , enhancing objects and activities that were parts of ceremonies having to do with important material and social transitions such as birth, puberty, courtship , marriage, and death . If life and art in the EEA was "hands-on , "as just described, it also directly engaged minds. Not only did the compelling actions and words of ceremonies keep "in mind " important knowledge, they fostered cognitive certainty and acceptance of authority. There were traditional ways to do things : to cure and heal , to resolve conflict, to make the rain come, to attract game, to bear a healthy child. There were fixed roles for one to assume — rites of passage made one an adult, a warrior, a wife ; the duties and benefits of these roles were accepted. There were times to plant and reap, celebrate and mourn, fast, and feast. one participated with others in ceremonies that validated these certainties, felt unmistakably as true by the suffusion of self -transcendent emotions that the ceremony generated . One accepted and affirmed a shared worldview with others.

In addition to the "hands-on" and "in mind" aspects ,one can also credit early artmaking with directly touching and conjoining hearts. Premodern societies are attached or cohesive. People are born into a family, a kin group, a community. Everyone knows each other ; individuals know who they are : their identity comes into the world with them, and it

is always connected to the identities of others so that it is hardly conceivable as separate from the group. One joins with this group to do things together that are perceived by everyone to be important and valuable. One values one's efforts and knows that others value them. One is "tied" to others, and great emphasis is placed on giving and receiving, on sharing, on reciprocity. The group is homogeneous. One always is face-to-face; there are no strangers.

Thus art also arose from and reinforced sociality — including ideas of morality. It reinforced not only the likemindedness but the oneheartedness of those who practiced it together, accomplishing this with emotionally compelling and satisfying sights, sounds, and movements.

Art and Life Today

If in the EEA the needs of hand, mind, and heart, as I have summarized them here with regard to art, evolved along with the means to satisfy them, it is clear how different things are today. Art still reflects and affects human attitudes to life, but in a mostly dispiriting way.

Art is rarely either appropriate or useful in a hands-on, down-to-earth sense, related to abiding life concerns, to fundamental needs. In the Western high art sense ascendent since the Enlightenment, at least, art is *by definition* autonomous, for its own sake. As often as not, art today is an idea or concept ("conceptual art"), if not a label (the "institutional theory of art"), and at best a "statement". It is usually as removed from the material conditions of existence and from natural materials as is much of the rest of our lives.

Similarly, rather than explaining the world to us in a comprehensive way, engaging our minds, embodying and reinforcing important knowledge and making reality comprehensible, art today is more of an escape from reality, a refuge. Those few of us who are artists may for a time reconcile nature and our anxieties, but because this knowledge and worldview are personal and hence subject to the questioning or dismissal of others, they are at best affirmed privately and rarely influence the minds of others.

Thus, the heart, like the hand and mind, is similarly left dissatisfied. Art in the West, for the past five hundred years, has increasingly arisen from and reinforced not fundamental human survival needs so much as individuality. Since the nineteenth century art has become a form of rebellion, an assertion of "freedom". This freedom is a freedom from community, responsibility, obligation, participation. And while there may be (or may have been) a headiness in this individualism, it requires that one forfeit the emotional solace and security of communal participation in the arts, and the belief in the value of what they embody. The potential for enhancing and transforming reality that the arts have perennially provides now all too often results in fostering cynicism, nihilism, shock (sometimes only gratuitious) and titillation. In any case, in responding to much art of the last half century at least, feelings have become of less moment than "catching on" to the artist's intention. While those who "get it" do, to be sure, comprise a community, the larger society is perplexed by or ignorant of contemporary art. Thus artists create their works without a sense of validation, except — if they are lucky — from a small group of their peers.

Relevance of the "Humanocentric" View of Human Nature

While an etholigical viewpoint cannot redeem the deprivations of or assaults to hand , mind , and heart inherent in post -EEA life , I can suggest that a "heliocentric" sort of awareness of the EEA's influence helps us to understand (at least in large measure) why we humans behave and suffer as we do. My particular examples have come from what I have called a behaviour of art , but (as with the infant attachment and adolescent male bonding that I referred to earlier) there are many other EEA-evolved behavioural predispositions that are similarly illustrative and that affect our behaviour and attitudes towards everything ,including the natural world .

I have used the word "heliocentric" to describe the momentous change in this new, long view of ourselves . Embracing it means that we should no longer be egocentric ("the world revolves around me") or even ethnocentric ("the world revolves around people like me") . Rather , this new view insists that we be humanocentric : " It is our underlying common human nature that ' makes the world go around' " .

The humanocentric view is appropriate and even essential to an ecological philosophy .In the first place ,it connects humans to the rest of life , plants and animals , establishing from the ground up , as it were , that we are constrained by the same forces of nature , even though we have imaginative minds that can , if enlightened , to some measure sidestep those constraints . A naturalistic and materialistic view of humans does not demean us , but rather helps us to appreciate the unique human attributes that are embroidered on the same fundamental animal plan , just as other species have their uniqueness . We should then feel compassion for other creatures whose lives are , no less than ours , miraculous and mortal .

Secondly, a humanocentric view connects humans to each other ,claiming that we are more alike than different — that our physical and psychological needs are the same , part of human nature . Cultures are means of satisfying these fundamental evolved needs . Individual and cultural differences , like the varying species embroidery mentioned above , make us unique but not intrinsically better or worse than other individuals or cultures (except insofar as our communities and societies do a better or worse job at satisfying the fundamental evolved needs) .

Apart from providing a world view that views humans as related to all of life and to each other ,the humanocentric perspective suggests what is possible and what is very difficult in planning human affairs. It enables us to recognize that many of our present socioeconomic and political global problems are consequences of our having evolved Paleolithic (even prePaleolithic) needs and responses that are inappropriate in the very different ("unnatural" or aberrant) environmental /social circumstances of modern societies . Unless we take into account these evolved needs and responses ,we cannot begin to address , much less solve , present problems .

This is not to say that we are doomed — prisoners of our evolved nature. Rather, if we are aware of this nature, we can see the folly of much current social practice. Looking at the apparent ineradicability of war and ethnocentrism, for example, we do not need to blame Satan , or original sin , or overstrict childrearing, or private ownership , or multina-

tional corporations — at least not wholly. Rather, one can point out that the predisposition to tribalism and intragroup loyalty (with their prototypes in attachment to protective figures in infancy and to the desire to imitate and please that is so important to childhood enculturation) was adaptive in the EEA, but with large interdependent populations and modern weaponry is highly maladaptive. We see how easily they can be incited and fanned in times of real or perceived deprivation and threat, just as we recognize a more palatable version of them in our own responses to patriotic or religious celebrations and other formalized occasions, where our ties to others are reinforced.

Additionally, we can interpret the current interest of Westerners in such nonWestern practices as Eastern mysticism, shamanism, harmonic convergence celebrations, Native American spirit quests, use of crystals and natural medicines, and so forth, as responses to real deprivations of hand, heart, and mind. Just as children who have been overfed with tasty but non-nutritious sugary food will spontaneously prefer to eat carrots and apples, we eventually hunger, in a mechanical and materialistic world, for spiritual nourishment.

The humanocentric perspective can even suggest why rational thinking ("reason" or "disembedded thought") is so difficult to achieve .In the EEA (as well as in much of our own lives, and certainly in those of our small children and our grandparents), disembedded thinking is rare and strange . It is inculcated and fostered by reading and writing , and certainly in the EEA we did not require or develop those special skills. We did use other kinds of mental abilities that are less rewarded in present-day society : visuospatial, mechanical, kinesthetic ,oral-verbal, musical, navigational, social, spiritual .People who are less gifted in verbal-analytic skills than in other abilities spend their school years feeling stupid and inadequate; in the EEA they would have been valued and rewarded. Mythopoetic thought was evolved over millennia as a way of inspiring and integrating members of a group and is hence more appealing to humans than objective analysis, which depending on literate skills, is quite recent.

The humanocentric view also makes clear that the impetus for the practice of the arts has grown out of our original (and, though masked, continuing) close relationship with nature . Beneath the veneer of civilization, we are creatures who for hundreds of thousands of years have marked our most important life concerns — prosperity and abundance, health, fecundity, relationship with others, the divine order, the moral order, the unknown, feared, or forbidden — by special elaborations of our bodies ,voices, movements, and surroundings. Although modern life may discourage participation in the arts and allow us (unlike our ancestors) to ignore our ultimate dependence on nature, both remain interrelated strands of the human condition that we forsake to our individual detriment and at our species, peril.

Notes and References

1. See Dissanayake Ellen, 1988, *What Is Art For ?*, Seattle: University of Washington Press; 1992, *Homo Aestheticus : Where Art Comes From and Why, New York:* Free Press (reprinted in 1995 by University of Washington Press); 1995, "Chimera, Spandrel, or Adaptation : Conceptualizing Art in Human Evolution", *Human Nature* 6:2, 99-117.

2. Tooby, John, and Leda Cosmides. 1990. "The past explains the present: Emotional adaptations and the structure of ancestral environments". *Ethology and Sociobiology* 2, nos. 4-5: 375-424.
3. In modern mercantile societies, art is regarded as, at best, entertainment, and otherwise considered to be dispensable.
4. Gamble, C. 1983. "Culture and society in the Upper Paleolithic of Europe," in Bailey, G., ed., *Hunter-Gatherer Economy in Prehistory: A European Perspective.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 201-211.
5. The fundamental evolutionary importance for humans and other animals of reducing psychological uncertainty is well described by Akko Kalma. See Kalma, A. 1986. "Uncertainty reduction: A fundamental concept in understanding a number of psychological theories, " in Wind, J. and V. Reynolds, eds., *Essays in Human Sociobiology.* Brussels: V.U.B. Study Series 26, 213-241.
6. Kobasa (1979) concludes that healthy and hardy people have a greater sense of control of events in their lives, tend to be committed to others and to themselves, and tend to possess a belief system that includes a sense of the meaningfulness of life. See Kobasa, S.C. 1979. "Stressful life events, personality and health: An inquiry into hardiness," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 37 (1) : 1-11.

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Environmental Aesthetics

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How do we differentiate between an appreciation of nature and our experience of being in nature? This question now seems crucial to anyone interested in notions of environmental beauty. Nature generates itself regardless of human activity and virtually everything, including ourselves in nature. One finds chaos and order in nature just as one finds it in human life. Wilderness areas in the world today, even in the remotest regions, generally carry with them traces of human intervention. Even our vast North American nature parks such as Yellowstone and Banff have been effectively designed with the tourist and nature lover in mind. The roads that traverse them,the parking lots and attractions are all suitably placed to afford a "view" of nature. Our parks designs are orchestrated to provide the visitor with a sense of reassurance and the roads, paths, signology promote a pristine, hands-off experience of nature. In *The Culture of Nature*, Alexander Wilson comments:

> "If the discourse of conservation is now often posed as a matter of survival, clearly that survival is cultural as well as bioregional. It's as if these new places on Earth (our National parks) acknowledge the wall or hedge between civilization and the natural world.[1]

As a North American youth living in Sri Lanka in the mid-1960's, my conception of nature had already been indelibly imprinted with the point of view that nature and human culture were two separate worlds. In North America history, like nature, was what you saw, entirely visible. Asia astonished me precisely because nature was not at all pristine yet had a kind of lived-in majesty. Asia's extensive cultural history could be witnessed in numerous outdoor monuments to Buddha and frescoes such as Lion's Rock in Sigiriya, but there was an invisible history as well. Cultural relics and signs of human history could just as readily be obscured, buried under nature as be visible to the bystander. North Americans now realize a history preceded our own on this continent, that of the Amerindians. Their viewpoint implied an ecologically integrated vision of human culture and nature. In the words of Chief Standing Bear, an Ogalala Sioux:

> We did not think of the great open plains, the beautiful rolling hills and the winding streams with tangled growth as 'wild'. Only to the white man was nature a 'wilderness' and only to him was the land 'infested' with 'wild' animals and 'savage' people. Earth was bountiful, and we were surrounded with the blessings of the Great Mystery.[2]

Yet an attitude that segregates human culture from nature, perceives the two as parallel rather than complementary histories still persists.If we must differentiate between an appreciation of nature and our actual experience of nature, in doing so we generally apply a set of values to the question. An aesthetic of nature presupposes firstly that nature is a subject,

something we look at, and are not directly involved in, and secondly that beauty is a value we apply to nature. The roots of this dilemma, to my mind, were initiated in the nineteenth century. A typical writer's commentary of the time, that of Washington Irving:

> Nothing can be more imposing than the magnificence of English park scenery. Vast lawns that extend like sheets of vivid green, with here and there clumps of gigantic trees, heaping up rich piles of foliage: the solemn pomp of groves and woodland glades, with the deer trooping in silent herds across them; the hare, bounding away to the covert; or the pheasant, suddenly bursting upon the wing: the brook, taught to wind in natural meanderings or expand into a glassy lake: the sequestered pool, reflecting the quivering trees, with the yellow leaf sleeping on its bosom, and the trout roaming fearlessly about its limpid waters.[3]

Washington Irving's description of nature and human culture implies that the two are superimposed on one another to achieve a sublime beauty. Nature is panoramic, a subject to be described in a manner similar to J. M. W. Turne's and John Constable's Romantic paintings of the English landscape. It is interesting how constructed and synthetic Irving's description of nature actually is, for Romanticism emerged in tandem with industrialism in the West. The landscape was generalized and filtered through an aesthetic of the sublime and beautiful. Today's landscape is neither Romantic nor pristine, yet in the West we continue to generalize and simplify nature. When looking at a natural forest or landscape, we will generalize its elements, visually. Seldom do we actually look at the diversity of camouflaged, co-dependent elements that go to make up a specific microcosm of nature. A forest is just a forest and a tree is just a tree. When we look at a tree, no different from the kind of tree our ancestors saw one thousand years ago, , we say nature reproduces its own forms, when in fact nature procreates itself. All materials that surround us, man-made or natural, derive from nature. With an awareness of this, we can achieve a better understanding of the basis of an aesthetic world view. Experience in an environmental sense implies that we accept the lesser place of the individual within a continuum of nature.

An integrative view of human culture and nature demands that we accept all elements of a given environment, both the ugly and the beautiful. We generally sequester the less beautiful aspects, filter out the negative elements. This "anaesthetic" viewpoint is a product of the discontinuity of our contemporary environments, where humanity is segregated from nature. It is a learned attitude that corresponds with an age of mass production and technology. A flower, a tree, a building site or industrial wasteland, all these things can be read as a multiplicity of elements, a composite and part of a greater whole, just as the built environment comprises a relativity of competing elements, each designed in relation to the next. Such a point of view provides one with the capacity to envisage environments, land forms, non-human life, man-made structures and environments as continuous and co-related. The aesthetic in this sense, depends on our accepting a holistic point of view toward organic and inorganic materials, environment and human culture.

As Arnold Berleant notes in *Living in the Landscape: Towards an Aesthetics of Environment,* environmental aesthetics has a humanistic function that includes the practical

but goes further. The objects no longer perceived in the modernist sense where the object is a means to an external end, nor is it a medium through which we function with intensity and purity of experience. Instead humanistic function becomes:

> (...) the entire setting, the aesthetic field, within which there is an experiential merging of the perceiver and the object of art in a creative perceptual exchange. Here function becomes active participation, combining the mechanical, organic, and practical aspects (...) a synthesis of aesthetic perception, social relevance, and human fulfilment develops into a cultural environment in which each of these not only encompasses the others but also becomes inseparable from them.[4]

Sculpture adapts itself well to outdoor sites and environments. Three-dimensional, it is perhaps the most suggestive and capable of bridging the gap between and aesthetic and phenomenological view of nature. Yet to witness the ancient frescoes or sculptures in India, Sri Lanka and elsewhere is to realize there has been a ling history of intervention into natural sites by artists, long before modernist notions of art ever existed. How do we reconcile an environmental vision of art with a modernist historical one? Modernist art has always been immersed in the notion that the individual creates the artwork. It does not directly involve community or collective culture. Herein lies the dilemma for environmental artists working today. Socially relevant art is not necessarily ecologically pertinent. A gap exists between the I-ness of formalist expression and the more poignant, intuitive side of human nature. The latter is ecologically pertinent,cannot be contained by traditional or avant-gardist imperatives.

Modernism has created such an immense lineage of creative work that we now tend to distrust works of art created by individuals purported to communicate broader issues, precisely because artistic practice has become categorized, removed from holistic cultural enterprise. One pertinent example of an art that embraces these realities effectively, to my mind, is Antony Gormley's *Field* project (1993) originally created in the Cholula Valley in Mexico. Engaging a family of brickmakers, and using local clay, Gormley's *Field* project was not only culture specific but also had global implications. The resulting grouping of 40,000 terracota figurines, each made to the size of a hand was a collaborative effort and involved an aesthetics of inclusion, not only of the immediate landscape material, but also the people who live there.

Notes and References

1. Alexander Wilson, *The Culture of Nature*, (Toronto: Between the Lines, 1991), p. 254.
2. Chief Standing Bear, *Land of the Spotted Eagle* (Boston, 1933), in T.C. McLuhan, *Touch the Earth: Native American Testimony* (New York: Harper and Row, 1978).
3. Washington Irving, *The Sketch Book*, (New York: G.P.Putnam, 1863), pp.96-97.
4. Arnold Berleant, *Living in the Landscape: Towards an Aesthetics of Environment.* Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas Press, forthcoming 1997.

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Environmental Aesthetics apropos a Plea for Human Survival

B.BEHERA

I. Man and Environment : An Indian Perspective

Man is ordinarily a chemical species who lives in an environment that is broadly divided into five major zones : Lithosphere, Hydrosphere, Biosphere Atmosphere and Exosphere (Figure.1). The changes in and around him are chemical and biological in nature. Around

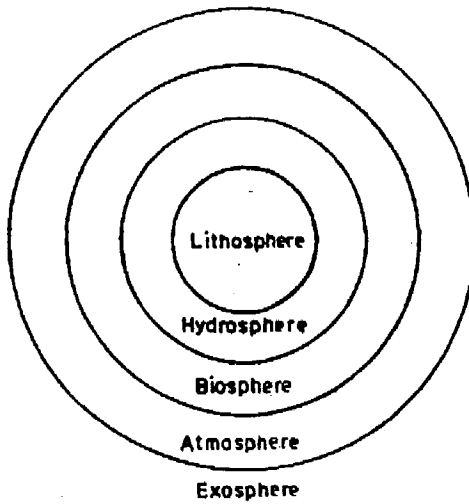

Fig.1 Our total Environment

8th c. B.C. Indian thinkers outlined the physico-chemical theories of cosmic evolution and observed that there are five basic elements of nature-earth (*Ksiti*) water (*ap*), fire (*tejas*), air (*marut*) and sky (*vyoma*) and these elements fit into the modern concept of various spheres of the total environment as earth corresponds to lithosphere, water to hydrosphere and biosphere, air to atmoshere and fire to exosphere. The ultimate ground of cosmic evolution is nature (*prakriti*). B.N.Seal writes :

> The manifested world is traced in the Samkhya to an unmanifested ground Prakriti which is conceived as formless and undifferentiated, limitless and ubiquitious, in-

destructible and undecaying, ungrounded and uncontrolled, without beginning and without end. But the unit of Prakriti, is a mere abstraction, it is in reality an undifferentiated manifold, an indeterminate infinite continuum of infinitesimal Reals.[1]

The ancient Indians saw nature as the source of all attractions because of its reoccurring rhythm. Its beauty is pristine and it appeals directly to the human mind which results in a controlled aesthetic response to a range of new and often intimidating sense experiences, thereby developing a feeling of love for nature.

The constituents (*gunas* literally' strands of a rope) of Prakriti are threefold : intelligence (*sattva*), energy (*rajas*) and mass (*tamas*). The starting point in the cosmic evolution is in a condition of equilibrium consisting of uniform diffusion of reals. Mass offers resistance to energy to do work which leads to the arrest of the cosmic evolution. This is overcome by varying quantities of intelligence, energy and mass which are interdependent and act on one another. Their interaction leads to cosmic evolution which is defined as the differentiation in the integrated, the differentiated within the undifferentiated, the determinate with the indeterminate and the coherent within the incoherent. Here mass and energy remain constant in both their manifested and unmanifested, actual and potential forms : Earth, Water, Fire and Air freely combine in various proportions and groupings to produce variety of substances in the universe.

The Indians gave a clear picture of the Atomic Theory of matter. The five *pancabhutas* are considered as *anus* (atoms) which are made up of infra-atomic particles known as *tanmantras*.[2] Each of the *pancabhutas* vary with groupings of the *tanmantras in their atoms.* The sky behaves both as non-atomic and atomic and serves as a starting point for the building of other forms of atoms in nature.[3]These atoms combine to form molecules and the combination takes place according to various geometrical arrangements in space. In a product, energy is due to the elements of *rajas*, resistance and stability due to *tamas* and the conscious manifestation due to *sattva*. The collocations of mass, energy and intelligence always break up and finally dissolve into Prakriti.

The Indian concept of atom antedates Dalton's Atomic Theory and the role of the atoms in the cosmic evolution is explained by modern science as: the tiny cell which is the primary building block of a living organism is made up of four elements, viz., Carbon (C), Hydrogen (H), Oxygen (O) and Nitrogen (N). These elements C,H,O,N are generated from nature (in conformity with Indian and Greek views of elements) and by some amazing arrangements generate life in an organism. Finally, when the organisms die these elements get dissoved into nature. Therefore the process of evolution and dissolution is a manifestation of nature. At the outset of the evolution, potential energy is converted into kinetic energy and again goes back to the state of potential energy at the time of dissolution

II. Man as an Aesthetic Animal

Atman (self) as envisaged by the Indian philosophers is immortal. Modern science says that life is created by an amazing arrangement of C,H,O,N. But *atom* conceived as the ultimate reality is beyond the operation of nature : it is not constituted by three *gunas* or basic elements of nature and is described as pure consciousness that both transcends nature

in its manifest and unmanifest forms as also emanates in them. According to the orthodox Vedic systems of Indian philosophy Nature consists of three levels (*Kosas*); inanimate matter, (*annam*), the vital force (*prana*) in living beings and the psychic force *(manah)* in some of the living beings (which is commonly called mind). But *atman* is all pervading, a pure consciousness that is immanent in all these three levels of existence while at the same time transcending them all. This means that *atman* remains unaffected at the time of dissolution- it is changeless and eternal and is not an arrangement of C,H,O,N. As an entity its stuff is none of the three constituents of nature which are impure since they are affected by pain, pleasure and indifference. But the stuff of *atman* is wholesome beautitude (*anandam*) that cannot be experienced by any animal excepting a human being only when the intelligence (*sattva*) stuff predominates in him. It is in this state that a man is aware of the *sattva* constituent of nature, which delights him. Thus this *sattva* constituent might be called 'beauty'. A man in a *sattva* state perceives the whole nature as a primehouse of beauty. In this broader perspective, beauty is not a special quality of nature. Nature acquires it sometimes and does not do so at other. Nature as such is beautiful, but its beauty is to be experienced by a quantified state of man.

III. Nature as viewed Aesthetically

A Chemist views nature and its influence on the behaviour of man aesthetically as he is engaged in designing and synthesizing molecules of nature which are of great importance in this age of science and technlogy. Professor Ronald Hoffman writes :

> What follows is an empirical enquiry into what one subculture of Scientists. Chemists call beauty. Without thinking about it, there are molecules that an individual Chemist, or the community as a whole, consider to be the objects of aesthetic admiration.[4]

The aesthetically evaluative properties of nature are grace, beauty and power, considering nature as an object with elements of intensity, unity and complexity. This generates an aesthetic response in the viewer.[5] The familiar philosophical views of Kant on how to feel pleasure on an object of nature or art are :

> He who feels pleasure in the mere reflection upon the form of an object..... justly claims the agreement of all men, because the ground of this pleasure is bound in the universal, although subjective, condition of reflective judgements, viz., the purposive harmony of an object (whether a product of nature or of art) with the mutual relations of the cognitive faculties (the imagination and the understanding).[6]

Thus what is admitted as beauty of nature is the sense of harmony, order and an object is beautiful well-proportioned with taste. The western thinkers have all along tried to study nature, know its secrets and finally to conquer it. But modern science says that one

can never conquer nature, one can only partially fulfil some of the human demands for sometime. Thus, while pursuing to conquer nature, man has grossly damged the beauty of environment, endangering the very existence of our planet, the earth.

The natural cycle of a living organism is birth, growth, old-age and death- it is irreversible and it cannot be altered. But nature has an amazing system of checks and balances. It corrects the mistakes in the environment. It is dynamic. Therefore it is always beautiful to the human eye.

IV. Nature/Environment : Pollution

Environmental degradation has led to massive pollution which has become a global phenomenon and its magnitude is threatening and explosive. It is inevitable because of increase in population, increase in human needs, urbanization and rapid industrialization. In this alteration of the environment, man has forgotten the environmental ethics and, thus, has questioned the very existence of living organisms and our planet, the earth.

The five elements of nature are responsible for supporting life on earth. Disturbance in any one of the five elements creates ecological imbalance which can destroy the global environmetal system leading to crisis in Man-Nature- Symbiosis.[7] The best and a simple example is the photosynthesis in plants (Fig.2). The photosynthesis in. plants and

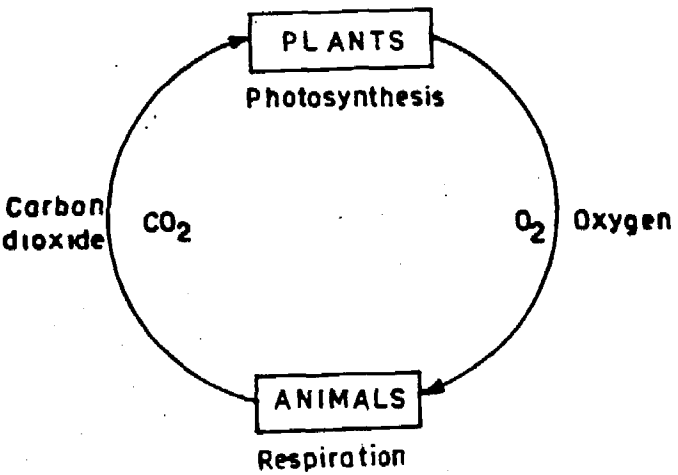

Fig.2 The Man-Nature- Symbiosis

respiration in animals are chemically opposite and complementary to each other and maintain the delicate balance of life-cycle in nature. In this cycle oxygen, a waste-product of plants is utilized by animals and carbon dioxide a waste product of animals is utilized by plants. The system is a delicate and complex one and is susceptible to disruptions. And if it gets disrupted, the entire mankind may be destroyed. Professor George Wald has summarized in the *Heritage:*

> Three billion years of life, three million years of man-like creatures, ten thousand years of civilization and mere two hundred years of industrial revolution have brought us to the brink of disaster. [8]

During the two hundred years, sciences have led to deeper understanding of processes in physical and biological world from macro-universe to micro-universe as also the destruction of delicate ecological processes has led to numerous unnatural phenomena that have been experienced by man so far.

Air pollution has become a global problem. There is a general uproar for fresh air throughout the whole world. The amount of carbon dioxide is slowly increasing in the atmosphere leading to 'Green House Effect', which, in turn, disrupts the hydrologic cycle (Fig.3) which is responsible for our weather and running life processes in our planet. The water cycle is fueled by the sun, and this is nature's own purification process. Without it, life on earth would cease. Therefore, man holds his future in his hands.

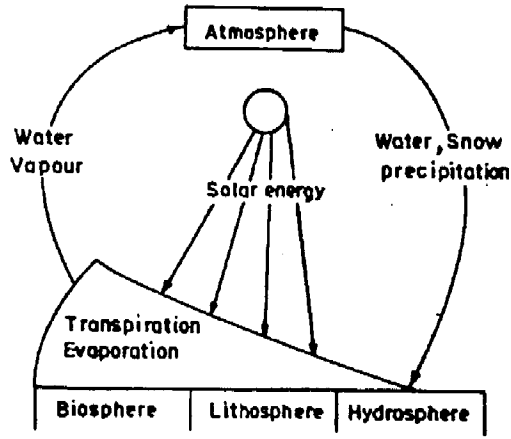

Fig.3 The Hydrologic Cycle.

Ozone in the stratosphere serves as a shield and saves human beings from the deadly effects of ultraviolet radiations from the sun, causing skin cancer and genetic mutations. Its depletion due to man-made chemicals will lead all living organisms and the plant kingdom towards total destruction.

The most striking feature of our planet is its extensive hydrosphere which interacts with the biosphere and the atmosphere through the actions of water. The hydrosphere has determined the course of human history. Horney is of the view :

> The hydrosphere has also played more subtle roles in the human experiences; it has been theorized that the geographical regions of greatest intellectual stimulation and thus the most advanced culture move with the regions of cyclonic storms (i.e., atomospheric water exchange). As the press of uncontrolled human fertility makes water more precious, the role of water in determining the fate of man, nations and civilizations will inevitably become enlarged.[7]

The way man-made pollution and deforestation continue, one apprehends that it may endanger the lives of living species, oceans, oxygen and trees in our planet in near future, converting it into a desolate lunar-like surface without any form of life in it. The gradual destruction of nature by man has probably resulted in deterioration of human val-

ues. The highest perfection of life which is essential to human society has become a dream. Material pleasure has taken the reign. Man has lost faith in himself and at the community level. He feels insecure and tends to reject old traditional values. He seems at times, to behave like an escapist. Pollution of mind, character and moral values are in the ascending order. Loss of human values in each and every sphere of life is alarmingly increasing. A time may come when the society will be full of despondent ascetics, unscrupulous sensualists and cowardly criminals without convictions and conscience leading to total degeneration in human values. It will be too late to realize its consequences then.

Man must preserve the five basic elements of nature viz., earth, water, air, fire and the sky as these are his total environment. He has to create a golden age where man was in a state of absolute simplicity and nature in a state of pristine purity. Let the sky, space, earth, oceans and plants be in peaceful existence to help mankind to enjoy an everlasting peace with Man-Nature in total harmony.

Notes and References

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2. The *tanmantras* according to science are the subatomic particles like electrons, protons, neutrons and so on.
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4. R.Hoffman,'Molecular Beauty', *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* , Vol.48, No.3, 1990, P.1.
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Art, Environment, and the Aesthetics of Art and Environment : A Chapter from Indian Philosophy

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Claude Levi-Strauss' naturalist syndrome of values indicates a relation of humanity and nature which can properly be interpreted as an ecological materialism rather than a reductionism; because when he says that myths reveal mind, mind reveals nature and nature is an autonomous being moving towards its own mysterious *telos,* it does not imply the hypothesis of the 'unity of science' i.e., the assumption that psychology can be explained in terms of biology, biology in terms of chemistry and chemistry in terms of physics, an assumption which has been cogently challenged by Hilary Putnam. Levi-Strauss' intention, however, is to focus on the living system of ecology and the interdependence of these systems with in animate nature. He writes :

> Structuralism teaches us to love and respect the ecology, because it is made up of living things, of plants and animals from which since it began mankind did not only derive its sustenance but also, for such a long time, its deepest aesthetic feelings as well as its highest moral and intellectual speculations.[1]

Levi-Strauss' ecological materialism explains a dialectrical relation between matter and life : "When we finally succeed in understanding life as a fascination of innert matter, it will be to discover that the latter has properties very different from those previously attributed to it". In an ecological system, such as this, where soul and body, mind and ecology, thought and the world are reconciled, human freedom should be conceived as the *participation* of a living being in the rights of the other species of the same ecological system.

We start with Levi-Strauss because his ideas come very close to what the ancient Indians anticipated several centuries ago, i.e., the dialectics of ecological structure and the origin of aesthetics as a human value in man's partcipation in the rights and states of affairs of his fellow ecological species. A leading aesthetician of environment, Arnold Berleant agrees with Levi-Strauss substantially when he states that environmental aesthetics "deals with the conditions under which people join as participants in an integrated situation"[2] Calling this participation as an engagement, Berleant further states that environmental aesthetics is an aesthetics of engagement which "leads to a restructuring of aesthetic theory, a revision especially congenial to environmental aesthetics, in which the continuity of engagement in the natural world replaces the contemplative appreciation of a beautiful object or scene.[3] Almost along a Kantian line Berleant ignores the difference between Nature and art. "Nature is beautiful" writes Kant, " because it looks like art, and art can only be called

beautiful if we are conscious of it as art while yet it looks like nature".[4] But Berleant differs from Kant on one major point, to put in the words of Levi-Strauss : man does not exist independently of nature. Man and nature are both parts of an ecological system tied with an eternal and essential relation of reciprocation. This relation is named by Levi-Strauss "eco-logical materialism". But man's inherent love for natural beauty, ("aesthetic feelings" in general, originating in the ecological materialism) needs an ontological structure (which levi-Strauss has failed to establish), and requires a metaphysical infrastrcture for supporting man's aesthetic function, which might be called an immersion into natural beauties. We claim that these laconae have been fulfilled by some of the schools and thinkers of ancient Indian philosophy.

For explaining an ecological symbiosios philosophically, what is primarily needed is a theory that living beings and inanimate phenomena of nature must have a common ontological status, so that any attempt at ignoring this symbiosis will destroy this onto logical iquilibrium causing serious disaster to the ecological structure itself. The oldest school of Indian philosophy, named Sankhya, provides us with a theory which fulfils this primary need.

II

Sankhya system teaches a metaphysics of dualism[5] -pure consciousness and matter or *Purusa* and *Prakrti* implying metaphors of a male and a female principle respectively that cause procreation. Prakrti is the Sanskrit word for the English 'Nature' and it means literally the primal cause of creation or the archetypal/ideal/best creation. This creation may be in two modes--manifest and unmanifest. As independent of each other, when Purusa and Prakrti remain away from each other, the creation of the latter is in its unmanifest form; and when these two are in proximity, Prakrti manifests itself. The material or substantive element of Prakrti is 'matter' the constituents of which are three 'qualities'-intelligence *(sattva[4])*, energy *(raja)* and mass *(tamas)*- or principles which are like three constituent strands of a rope. The Sanskrit word *guna* designates three phenomena--quality, strand and contingency. Along with its first two meanings the word *guna* indicates in its third meaning that the material stuff of Prakrti's creation in both of its modes, is secondary in the sense that while comparing the status of both the Realities- Purusa and Prakrti- Purusa is the primary one and Prakrti the secondary. In such a consideration, one might note a male-dominated socio-cultural tradition. But such a reading would be confusing since Purusa is devoid of any gender division. As a stuff of pure consciousness it is absolutely unqualified and is therefore free from all kinds of relativism and transformation. Purusa is not the Platonic idea, nor the Aristotelian unmoved-mover. Prakrti's manifestation starts when it is charged with the pure consciousness of Purusa. The latent *gunas* are stirred and modifications takes place uncessantly. The three *gunas* in their various modification reflect the pure consciousness of Purusa in various ways and proportions in accordance with their predominance in different cases. *Sattva* represents consciousness and *Tamas mass* whereas *rajas* in

its mediating role is in-between these two extremes. Sankhya offers an elaborate picture of the process of Prakrti's teleological evolutes. But for the sake of precision and relevance, it will be adequate to mention here that the evolution of nature- the five gross elements such as earth, water, fire, air and ether as well as the psychical and kinetic elements of all kinds of organism such as mind, ego, sense organs and motor organs constituting the objects and subjects of knowledge- are material in essence and reflect pure consciousness not in its primal changelessness, but in its continuous changing process in accordance with its various association with the material trasformation of Prakrti. Vacaspati Mishra (9th c. AD.) writes:

> The reals*(gunas)* have two forms, viz, the determiner or the perceiver, and the perecived or the determined. In the aspect of the determined or the perceived, the gunas evolve themselves as the five infra-atomic potentials, the five gross elements and their compounds. In the aspect of the perceiver or determiner, they form the modification of the ego together with the senses.[6]

It is now clear how all the objects and organisms of the world share a common ontlogy- they are all material differing only, in the proportion of the conbination of the *gunas*. A living being differs from a piece of stone only on the ground that in the former *sattva* and *rajas* predominate while ' in the latter *tamas* is the predominant *guna*. Similarly, a man differs from other animals as well as from other menbers of his species in terms of the nature of the compounds of *gunas*. Each and every particle of this world is meaningful only in its relation to the others. The Saussurean linguistic structure upon which Levi-Strauss builds up his notion of ecological structure should basically reflect this Sankhya system of Prakrti. The reciprocation among the evolutes of nature is essential inasmuch as it is very much inherent in the very common ontology of the ecosystem. Since the real or physical enviroment forms a part of the geographical or virtual environment, it is necessary that the latter should not distort the former in any way that it would violate the minimum principles of their co-existence. Prakrti intends the coexistence of all the evolutes. Any violation or exploitation from any side will go against its teleology causing sinister disaster.

Having thus discovered an ontological unity of both matter and mind, of the perceived and the perceiver one understands the unity of the known and the knower as suggested by the Sankhya system. The knower's mind assumes the form of the known; consequently, such an epistemological stance justifies man's preception of natural beauty as an engagement or participation or what we call "immersion' where the dualism of experience is abolished. But the question is : how could the Sankhya system, advocating an inherent dualism, sucessfully account for a non-dual epistemology? The answar to this question is offered by the very teleology of Prakrti's evolution. It seems Sankhya's dualism is only apparent. In accepting the dualism of Purusa and Prakrti Sankhya also considers the primacy of Purusa and contingency of Prakrti, i.e., Sankhya says that the evolution of Prakrti is meant for the liberation of Purusa from its bondage in the materialist structure of Prakrti. One must avoid the apparent self-contradiction involved in this view. One might ask if Purusa is independent of Prakrti, how is it that it is in bondage? True, Purusa the pure consciousness is not at all in any kind of bondage. It is one, absolute, free from all bondage

of relativism caused by the *gunas* of Prakrti. It transends all *gunas* of Prakrti. But when Purusa charges Prakrti with its consciousness in order that Prakrti may start evolution, *sattva* the trauslucent element of Prakrti reflects this Purusa in manifold ways by virtue of its various combinatioms. In fact, it is this Purusa-in-reflection which is in bondage, not the real one; and the question of liberation arises only in the case of these reflections, the nature of which is described as only -ness *(Kaivalya)*, i.e., the experience or knowlrdge of these reflected purusas *(mark the small 'p')* that they are not many, but only one. Another point to be marked - the distance or proximity of these two realities Purusa and Pakrti of which Sankhya speaks is only metaphorical, meant to explain a situation which is otherwise inexplicable in language. The question of time and space arises only in the case of Prakrti's evolution. Both of them are only material categories necessary for explaining the relativisim of Prakrti's material structure. They are simply meaningless outside the manifest nature. Of course a concrete and convincing answer to this puzzle has not been given by the pioneering philosophers of Sankhya such as Isvarakrsna (2nd c. A.D.) or Kapila (9th c. AD.). But the situation appears clear in the later thinkers of this school as well as in the other branches of orthodox Indian philosophy and the later interpretations available in the mythical narratives of *puranas*. Purusa is understood as the primary reality of which Prakriti is the creative aspect or energy. Prakrti is as real as Purusa, not any illusion or *maya*. Vacaspati writes: " Prakrti is like the *maya* but it is not *maya*. It is trifling in the sense that it is changing. Just as *maya* constantly changes, so the transformations of Prakrti are every moment appearing and vanishing and thus suffering momentary changes. Prakrti being eternal is real and thus different from *maya*."[7] Abhinavagupta (10th A.D.) also upholds the reality or truth of Prakriti.[8] According to him, the very essence of nature is its changefulness; and this change, the essence of nature, is also a kind or aspect of the ultimate or primary reality (Purusa of Sankhya and Paramasiva of Kashmir Saivism) in its manifested form. Manifestation (or creation) and unmanifestation (or desolution) do not follow each other chronologically. They are rather simultaneous occurrences explaining the essential changefulness of Prakrti.

It is this continuous process of eternal change in Prakrti, its appearance or representation every moment in new forms, which constitutes 'beauty' of nature. Magha, the eminent epic poet in Sanskrit (9th c.A.D.) explains natural beauty exactly along this line in his poem *Sisupalavadha*.[9] Krshna, the king of Dvarika is on the way to Indraprastha for attending a royal ceremony of sacrifice. At the sunset he enjoys the beauty of landscape - a big hill named Raivataka is flanked by the setting sun in the west and the rising moon in the east, both of them looking like two bells tied to the neck of an elephant, i.e., the hill. The poet says in the mouth of Krshna that the beauty (of nature) consists in the ever new forms that nature assumes every moment. The justification of this simile does not lie only in the imagination of the perceiver as a fictional form; it is also a *quality* of the perceived which is responsible for creating (or reflecting) the simile in the mind of the perceiver. In other words, man's experience of beauty in nature is due to an ecological symbiosis that is rooted in the ontological identity of both these phenomena—man and nature.

III

But what is the case with the beauty of art ? It is commonly believed that the word 'art' in its Latin derivation denotes an artifice, a man-made thing, manipulation of materials of nature such as metal, stone, wood, sound and colour which aims at transforming or transfiguring their original/ordinary/commonplace appearances. Art stands in opposition to nature both semantically and functionally; and accordingly, aesthetics, despite its traditional meaning of appreciation of natural beauty, of the sublime in nature, in the writings of Kant and Schelling, is established today as the philosophy of art that aims at exploring the nature and meaning of art in general, and of the individual art forms in particular. But recently Arnold Berelant has proposed to bridge up this gap, this discrimination in order to formulate aesthetics as "a universal category, not *the* universal category but the omnipresent concept of a pervasive feature of experience" [10] so as to accommodate both art and nature in equal terms.

How far this utopia can be actualized ? Can there be a single principle of judging and appreciating both nature and art ? Since judgment is a necessary function of aesthetic appreciation, is there any sense in claimimg *judgment* of natural beauty by human beings ? Aristotle has emphatically distinguished between nature and art, a man-made object with a quality which we may call "aesthetic" on the point that art is an artificial reproduction of nature. In spite of a common ontology, art differs from nature in two respects : first, it is a representation, and secondly, this representation, instead of being merely a replica of nature, may improve over it, i.e., it may bring to completion what is incomplete in nature. Beauty of art lies in these two distinct qualities which are the very criteria of appreciating as well as judging works of art. These qualities also determine our response to them defining, in a way, this response as "aesthetic". Arthur Danto specifies our responses to an artwork and to an object of nature or to a man-made object which is not an art work, and these specifications are based on differences in qualities. He writes :

> learning it is a work of art means that it has qualities to attend to which its untransfigured counterpart lacks, and that our aesthetic responses will be different. And this is not institutional, it is ontological. We are dealing with an altogether different order of things.... a work of art has great many qualities, indeed a great many qualities of a different sort altogether, than the qualities belonging to objects materially undiscernible from them but not themselves art works. And some of these qualities may very well be aesthetic ones, or qualities one can experience aesthetically or find "worthy and valuable" ? But then in order to respond aesthetically to these, one must first know that the object is an art work, and hence the distinction between what is art and what is not is presumed available before the difference in response to that difference in identity is possible.... there are two orders of aesthetic response, depending upon whether the response is to an artwork or to a mere real thing that cannot be told appart from it.[11]

It appears therefore difficult to agree with Berleant that both art and nature (Danto's 'mere real thing') can be accommodated in equal terms. Particularly, judgment as an inevitable part of aesthetic appreciation cannot function in case of nature which is not an inten-

tional object like a man-made artwork. Indian aestheticans have discriminated between nature and art and have prescribed different modes of appreciation for these two altogether different phenomana.

IV

Nature and art share a common material ontology; but so far as qualities are concerned they are of two different orders of things. The earliest Indian concept of art available in the Vedas is that of an 'image' (*silpa*) a *counter form (pratirupa)* of natural phenomenon.[12] Later, in the pre-Christian era idea of art as a man-made artificial object is noted; and as early as the 4th c.B.C. Bharata's idea of the theatrical performance as a 'toy' also corroborates the idea of art as an intentional object meant for learning or enlightenment through entertainment. The drama is discriminated from nature for its represntational quality insofar as it is not an object or event of nature, but a deliberate imitation (representation) of the events and objects of nature both in its manifest and unmanifest forms. The criteria for appreciation of the dramatic art are also based on its representational qualities. Abhinavagupta a commentator on Bharata points to the distinct attitude of the dramatic audience.[13] Before entering an auditorium the audience is fully aware of the fact that what he is going to witness is a representation of nature, an intentional performance of an event by a group of human beings, through their gestures, postures dialogues in accompaniment with costume, and all other histrionic devices including facial expressions. He is aware that he is not going to see any environmental phenomenon, either real or virtual, a mountain, a flood, a battle or a garden or even a conjugal love or quarrel. He is aware that what the actors or actresses would be doing on the stage are not at all concerned with them personnally. They would be *acting (abhinaya)* behaving in a way clearly connoting *representing/projecting/ illustrating* certain archetypal characters, situations, relationships. This awareness of the audience might be called "aesthetic attitude" in recent vocabulary. This aesthetic attitude is not purely a subjective phenomenon since it depends upon the very quality of the object that the audience is experiencing. This awareness of the audience also makes aesthetic appreciation and judgment possible. What the audience judges is not the degree of resemblance of the representation with the represented, because he knows that the represented object is only intentional (fictional). He has neither seen it nor has he any necessity for seeing it. Bharata has strictly instructed that all the represnted objects must be intentional, non-existent at least during the life-span of the audience so that none of them should have a chance of perceiving it directly.[14] The plots and characters of the drama must be taken from either myths or remote history. By doing this, confusion of art and reality (nature) shall be avoided. It must be borne in mind that art is a man-made object which resembles nature only in its kind (*sajatya*); by no means it is a reproduction simply because man cannot reproduce nature. Any attempt at confusing art with nature will destroy the very purpose of art. Whatever may be the degree of realism, art should not produce any illusion of reality, and it does not do so because the audience is already aware that he is or would be perceiving art, not reality (nature).

What the audience appreciates is therefore, not the degree of resemblance of art with nature, rather the degree of art's (or the artist's) success in *particularising /projecting/*

illustrating the general or archetypal patterns of nature in all its spheres of phenomena. Obviously this appreciation involves judgment and criticism. The very fact that different performing arts represent (or present/perform) musical composition, (dance) rhythm or subject differently, and the very fact that they are always expected to do that prove the truth of Abhinava's argument that these several representations of the same text etc. are particularizations of general patterns. Aesthetic judgment necessarily involves the answer to the question : how far which representation particularizes the same general pattern in what way? Criticism even by way of suggestions for improvement is possible only in those cases where the critic is sure that the maker of the work he criticizes is accessible to his criticism and the work is fully under the control of the maker for further modification. Obviously, this type of criticism is meaningless in case of appreciation of nature, at least in case of real environment. The case of virtual environment is slightly different in that it is open for criticism of the audience. The man-made environment as it is - the artificial lake, for example, planted forest, garden and the villa constructed with an architectural style matching symmetrically with the entire environment--its appreciation is slimier to the appreciation of a landscape painting. The viewer can utilize this environment and the designer can also modify it accordingly. In aesthetic experience appreciation and critical judgment are simultaneous necessary functions. Even in case of experiencing real environment, say, in the case of Magha's description of the Raivataka hill referred to above, the simile is an art-form conferred upon the environment by the viewer. In fact, all such literary devices are different forms of the writer's aesthetic vision conferred on the objects of his description. According to the Indian thinkers, all such appreciations are self-immersion (Berleant's participation'). Abhinavagupta read along with the Sankhya metaphysics and epistemology would come to a point that aesthetic appreciation is possible when in an audience *sattva* predominates so that his limited consciousness or ego (*ahamkara*) is elevated to an extraodinary level - not exactly to the level of the absolute consciousness or Purusa the primary reality, where the experience would be the mystic experience of salvation (*kaivalya*), i.e., absolute identity of the purusa and Purusa. On the other hand, aesthetic experience is as homogeneous *(ekaghana)* as the mystic one, but lacks its harshness (*parusata*). Abhinavagupta writes :

> Aesthetic enjoyment consists in the tasting of one's own consciousness; this tasting endowed with extreme pleasantness (beauty) which it obtains from a contact with the various latent traces of pleasure, pain etc. It differs both from ordinary perception, which is full of obstacles (pragmatic requirements, etc.), and from the perception of the yogins, which is not free from harshness, on account of the total lack of any tasting of external objects.[15]

The mystic experience of salvation is absolutely devoid of any *guna*; but aesthetic experience is predominated by *sattva guna*, the quality or the material constituent of nature which purges man's emotions of their impurities, i.e., pleasure, pain and indifference in connection with the experience of the ordinary natural phenomena. When mystic experience is devoid of all emotions, aesthetic experience is coloured (*anuranjita*) by these purified emotions.[16] To put it precisely, aesthetic experience is nothing but the experience of

these purified emotions as they are presented in artworks (particularly in the drama), never in reality. Because only an artwork can present an emotion in its generic form so as to make it relishable for the audience.

Understood in this light, aesthetic experience of nature *per se* is a contradiction in terms. Whenever there is any such experience, one must be aware that the viewer confers an art form on the environment in question. It is exactly on this point that Bhattanayaka (10th c.A.D.) a commentator on Bharata suggests for an enjoyment of the whole world as a drama (*jagannatyam*).[17] This is an alternative for the yogic method of mystic experience - a method of experiencing reality as an artwork. Experience of Drama lasts for a few hours. But experiencing reality as a dramatic performance is everlasting. When Vatsyayana (3rd c.A.D.) proposes for an aestheticization of the life-style of a citizen[18], he also means the same-- transformation or transfiguration of the hundrums of man's life into an artwork. Obviously, this aestheticization has a practical merit : it prompts the promotion of human value in reducing man's selfcentric attitude to the external world, minimizing thereby many of man's psychological and sociological crises.

V

Coming back to the Sankhya view of nature as a teleological manifestation, one might interpret that since nature is the paradigm of all creations, particularly for its expressiveness and perfection of form, natural beauty should be the ideal of artistic beauty. Even Vijnanabhiksu (16th C.A.D.) argues that a statue had already been there in the stone : "just as the image already existing in the stone is only manifested by the activity of the statuary, so the causal activity also generates only that activity by which an effect is manifested as if it happened or came into being at the present moment".[19] The statement implies that since nature is inclusive of both subject and object, making, maker and made, man's making is only secondary or a metaphorical function. In fact, man being a part of nature man's making is practically nature's making. All the man-made things actually preexiet in nature in a latent state. Its manifestation by human agency is practically the manifestation of man's ego or *ahamkara*. In this view, art is not altogether a new presence. It is rather a presentation (manifestation/ publication) of the artist's subject or ego. The seventeenth-century neo-Platonic view that beautiful natural objects are parts of the organic process of nature holds good in this Sankhya context. Each phenomenon must be experienced in the structural context of nature as a whole, not in piece-meal. If both the artwork and the artist are parts of nature, then in what way does the experience of these two differ ? Sankhya's holistic view is meaningful when the subject-object dichotomy is totally ignored as in the case of an individual *purusa* who has obtained salvation or *kaivalya* (only-ness). For him experience of nature and experience of art are both meaningless. On the other hand, although for Sankhya, milk and curd are materially the same, they are nevertheless two different phenomena. Similiarly, if art is a manifestation of nature, it is different from all other phenomena. Taste of milk and curd is certainly not the same. Art is a part of nature; but as a man-made object it differs from natural phenomena; for its very artifactuality it is artificial. Environmental aesthetics cannot equate the experience of environment and art. They may be materially the same, but they differ in qualities or *gunas*. Man's experience of these two, therefore, differs

qualitatively. Environmental aesthetics can justify itslef either by conferring an art form on environment or by designing environment as an artwork.

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Review Article

History, Political Unconscious and the Symbolic in Jameson

S.K.PANDA

The present discussion is based on Jameson's *The Ideologies of Theory* appearing in two volumes (University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1988. Vol.I- pp.212, Vol.II- pp.230). The first concerns itself with the situations of theory and the second with the problems of cultural and historical studies. These volumes, in fact, put together essays written by Jameson over a period of fifteen years from 1971 to 1986. Most of the ideas contained here are reworked, elaborated and given a more coherent shape in the longer works which intersperse the publication of these occasional papers.

In the general scepticism of the post-modern world the idea of fixed meaning and literary interpretation are consigned to a disreputable space. This kind of a situation had its seeds in the structuralist questioning of the substantialist thinking in general and their insistence on relational perceptions. Jameson has apparently similar views on the question. But his radicalism comes to the fore and his theoretical shift a little away from structuralist thought becomes clear in his definition of the process of criticism as a revealing of the content. In other words, Jameson and the structuralists reject interpretation for quite different reasons. Because for one content is self-evident and for the other it is non-existent. It is rather the positive and negative hermeneutics of Paul Recoeur that comes in handy for his purpose as weapons of restoring the original meaning and of demystifying the prevalent ideologies respectively. He tolerates the other ideas of interpretation insofaras they are metacommentaries, which remark on their own situation or which shift the attention back to history.

Metacommentary as a historicizing practice, in the opinion of Jameson, understands form as an expression of the inner logic of the content. This process could be revealed, he says, at the third semantic horizon in a metacommentatory exercise. This semantic level with a historical dimension to it includes the other two. It deals with social change and the changing modes of production finding out complex ideological interplay at the level of form. The first is political in character which treats the text as a complex symbolic reaction, as a satirical pronouncement on the degraded society in the present, and it expresses a vision of society after the nostalgic image of a pre-capitalist one. The second is a social level which articulates the contradictions of society and identifies the corresponding ideologemes. Jameson elaborately deals with the three moments of the process of interpretation in *The Political Unconscious*, which contains most of his original thinking[1].

He in his *Ideologies of Theory,* with which we are chiefly concerned here, makes a historical survey of the transformations of capital and identifies their aesthetic modes. The cultural forms of realism, modernism and post-modernism, he says, go with market capitalism, imperialism and multi-national capitalism respectively. In the age of market capitalism the bourgeoisie had a tendency to naturalize history or transform culture into nature. This phenomenon finds expression in the attempt of realism to make meaning appear natural to give credibility to the story. In the age of Imperial power a critique of the system in modernism is disguised in tropes used to construct a utopian vision. Finally multinational capitalism with its multiculturalism leads to the death of the subject in the post-modern aesthetic domain.

Jameson's concept of history draws upon that of Althusser for whom history is a process without a *telos* or subject. But history, he thinks, is available to us only through its prior textualization and , therefore, is bound to be alienated by its representation. Because, the symbol with which it is sought to be represented has its zero degree only in case of animal language. Man has no choice but to think ideologically. Since history is inaccessible in its objectivity, the imaginary, which inhabits an intermediate space between the symbolic and the real and which is a pre-verbal register with a visual logic, acts as a substitute and has a tendency to absolutize itself as opposed to the particularized framework of the symbolic.

History being an absent cause for Jameson, truth is nothing but a part of a larger process of demystification, and Marxism with its metacommentary approach and its comprehensive method of analysis is the most suitable apparatus to employ while dealing with it. With the help of Marxist critical process, he believes, one ought to be able to reveal the hidden historical dimension of all formal pronouncements. Making a historical survey of literary devices and their mutantions Jameson points out the fact of their transfprmations from ethical into political and historical categories.

Jameson's poetics of historiography is based on the premise that form and content are clearly separable entities. He draws upon Hayden White's table of structural relationships to drive home his point, and concludes that an apparently bizzare structural combination of a romantic emplotment, a conservative ideology and an ironic mode is possible in modern times which mark a multiplicity of cultural productions.

In the process of his attempt to chart a syntax of history Jameson makes an appraisal of the Weberian typology supposed to have a narrative undercurrent inspite of the latter's effort to emphasize the value-free character of Sociology as a discipline. Robert Nisbet's pronouncement on Weber as an artist in his *Sociology as an Art Form*[2] lends further credibility to Jameson's assessment of Weber, to which is linked the latter's replacement of the economic with the political category, his specific contribution to the anti-Marxist arguments. But Jameson makes it clear that Weber is only against the vulgar Marxist materialism. He invokes Weber to convince us that all the philosophical positions that insist on an immanent teleological movement in history must be

repudiated, and draws attention to an inextricable link between humanization of the world and a growing sense of the meaninglessness of life. He also stresses the mediatory role of the superstructure in Weber as well as Marx in regard to changes in the infrastructure suggesting that the ultimate source of meaning lies at the level of superstructure. For instance, protestantism performs the function of an intermediary and a valorizing agent in the transition from a feudal to a modern society.

Jameson hints at the material existence of the superstructural elements and seems to indict dialectical history with its prioritization of matter and its vision of a necessary failure and blood-guilt associated with the inevitable class struggle. But he admits at once the inseparability of such a vision from the historical position of realized socialism. He sees in Roland Barthe's use of the zero term a way out of the said blood-guilt or nightmare of history, which is a part of his attempt to assert the validity of the statements in utopian terms of the problems otherwise finding socialist formulations. Utopia is rather synonymous with socialism, he would insist, though historical materialism replaces utopian practice as an authentic mode of thinking, owing to the ahistorical vision of the latter.

But Harbermas thinks differently. He associates political reaction with antimodernism and rehabilitates modernism as a vehicle of progressive utopian thought. Far from being indifferent to history and reality, modernism, he would argue, awakens reality only to neutralize it the next moment through its utopian obsession. It is a case of a transformation of ideology into utopia in modernism. In other words, an ideological critique of reality is at once metamorphosed into a dream of a rational domination of future. On the other hand the idologizing exercise in realism, according to the ideologues of modernism, is camouflaged in a universalizing discourse. Realism's preconconceived notion of reality is what is objectionable to them. Thus, when they denounce realism they couch it in pre-aesthetic terms instead of in the aesthetic and cognitive style of the latter. The other view of realism, particularly that of Lukacs and Auerbach considers it a privileged mode of apprehending the world. This position on realism sees its parallel in the Sonata form in music and in the abolition of perspective in painting.

jameson, for his part, finds both - the arguments for and against realism - completely ahistorical though equally convincing, and tries to put them in a historical perspective. He would prescribe himself a release from his own modernist cultural position and would exhort himself to assess modernism's relationship to the other cultural positions with the help of a larger supra-cultural paradigm. Lukacs, he thinks, is ahistorical in his failure to see the connection between realism and commerce and in his suggestion that a different social order such as communism would retain the same style of constructing reality as prevailed in the nineteenth century. Jameson makes it clear that secular and objective reality, the very materials that realism dealt with, are inextricably bound up with a particular stage of capitalism and have disappeared now, and that realism itself is now seen as one of many cultural forms. With the decline of

the bourgeoisie as a class along with the disintegration of collective vitality and destabilization of some common truth the concomitant cultural form that was realism ceased to be an appropriate mode of knowing the world. Jameson's stance on realism is different from that of the champions of modernism in that he, instead of falsifying the claims of realism unlike the latter, puts historical limits on them. He illustrates the point with the help of Deleuze and Guattari's notion of the famous historical triad of savagery, barbarism and civilization, originally formulated by Engels and Morgan. For Deleuze and Guattari, these stages of human history are characterized respectively by coding, overcoding and decoding of human life, of the primordial schizophrenic flux. The process of decoding is particularly associated with quantification and rationalization of capitalism and is at one with the demystifying mission of nineteenth century realism. They further draw attention to a process of recoding the flux through a return to the sacred and the mythical in modernism. Having taken a historical view of realism Jameson states that the realistic novel, even as it breaks the primitive signifiers, proves the provisional nature of secular reality as an object of the narrative process. He sounds ambiguous or rather paradoxical when he futher remarks by way of rounding off the discussion of this problem that Lukacs inspite of his limitations may be ultimately correct in his pronouncements on modernism as something confirming the basic assumptions of realism but only driving them underground under the compulsions of a subjectivized world, compelling one to reacknowledge the validity of a secular reality in a time known for its tendency to abrogate it.

In his reflections on the Brecht - Lukacs debate Jameson's amphibious act makes it difficult to pin him down to a definite position. He thinks, both are correct in a way yet none wholly acceptable. He probably finds objectionable Lukacs' hostile views on modrnism when he treats it as a cultural form disposed to avoid the social question[3], asserting in his turn the significance of its repressed social content. He draws attention to Brecht's attack on Lukacs' slip into formalism and his incomplete grasp of the category of class struggle in a very dispassionate manner. But he is mildly critical of Lukacs' "formal mean between a modernistic subjectivism and an overly objectivist naturalism". On the other hand, he considers Brecht's concept fo *verfremdung* or the estrangement effect of great relevance today, particularly for its potential to effect an exit from the *cul de sac* of agitational didacticism of the traditional revolutionary art. He refers to the tendency of Brechtian aesthetics to reassert the presence of the principle of play in realistic art against the insistence of Lukacs on its reflexive role. He would cap the discussion of Brecht-Lukacs debate with a suggestion that a new realism should do well to block the power of reification in modern society and at the same time to rediscover the lost totality. This new realism is also to integrate into its own system the most crucial aspect of modernism - its power to break automatism and to see reality in a new perspective.

Marxism and Historicism is an important area in the scholarship of Jameson. He asserts the finality of Marxism as a semantic horizon precisely because its

mastercode, he thinks, is an absent cause always resisting a full representation. Marxism, he affirms, demystifies the other frameworks and exposes their claim to being total systems of interpretation as false, rather than blot out their objects of study. He endorses Marxist analysis and is himself convinced that the other interpretive styles are subject to severe limitations as they wall themselves off from the social totality. Historicism is defined by Jameson first in a very simple fashion, as one's relationship to the past and one's chances of grasping its monuments. But he would like us to always remember that our approach to the past is invariably routed through the ideologies of the imaginary or through the political unconscious. On the contrary, the post-structuralist disapproval of historicism is indicated in their rejection of the genetic and teleological systems of thought. Teleology, a belief in a positive future, and genetic thought which projects it onto the past and sees that past as an evolutionary predecessor of an accomplished time of a historical nature are both disowned by post-structuralism on the strength of its synchronic thought. Jameson does not quarrel with synchronic thought so long as it stops short of repudiating history as an object of analysis. He even goes so far as asserting with Althusser that Marx's capital is a synchronic model and does not hesitate to admit that Darwin too is synchronic in the same sense.

Jameson persistently gives a call to historicize. His reading of existential historicism as a system of thought that defines history as a relationship between an individual subject living in the present with a cultural object of the past and his treatment of the same contact as that between two modes of production is in keeping with this habit of his. By this he refutes all those frameworks that vociferously argue in favour of a synchronic thinking, particularly those that tend to collapse all past and future into a perpetual present, which is a result of being locked in one's own reality. To this frame of mind of Jameson is related his revaluation of the Schizo as one with deep involvement in history, and his assertion of the latter's evolution from *Homo natura* to *Homo historia.* Ultimately he stresses the impact of time on the individual and restores to past its radical difference as a life form and its right to sit in judgment over the present

Jameson understands a specific period not as a common way of thinking but as one confronting the same objective situation. He acknowledges the diversity of responses to the shared moment with a rider that those responses are circumscribed by the inner structure of the moment. But what is the nature of the structural limit ? How does it operate in the process of reality's mediation through the political unconscious ? What is the nature of dialogue between the structure of reality and the ideology of the unconscious in the end product, that is the symbolic ? These are some of the questions that are left unanswered.

However, with the said assumption Jameson tries to periodize the sixties on historical, political and economic basis looking for posibilities to establish parallel relations between the phenomena at the different levels. He points out the dissolution of the old concept of social class in the wake of the new "subjects of history" or "political categories" like the blacks, women, students and the third world subjects. In this

new situation the First world sixties appropriate Third-worldism as cultural and political models. The struggle of the marginal "subjects of history" to write back to the centre through a process of decolonization paradoxically goes together with neo-colonialism, an economic avatar of colonialism. For instance, the penetration of capital into the village structure through what is called green revolution, and into the unconscious in the form of culture industry, with which the last virgin space of life is colonized.

Coming to the cultural level, Jameson tries to relate the successive cultural forms to the social dynamics. He says, realism transformed itself into naturalism, which acted as the aesthetic form of mass culture. On the other hand, modernism, which evolved as a liberation from the hegemony of realism, the representational form peculiar to market capitalism, is in dialectical opposition to mass culture. The gradual easing of the opposition between the two and the convergence of the high and the mass cultural form fashion the post-modern moment. Most of the formal properties were already there in modernism, but they acquired a different significance in the position of a cultural dominant that they became in the post-modern situation.

Jameson links the transformations in the structure of sign to the cultural changes. High modernism, he insists, paves the way for a total auto-referentiality of the sign, the putative structuralist dictum. The reification accompanying capitalist flourishes of the time divorced the sign from its referent, creating an autonomous space for culture. Althusser's paradoxical idea of the semi-autonomous sphere of all culture marks again the turning point. For him, it is the ever present shadow of the social content that makes possible the autonomy of the cultural form, which means the new cultural space is no longer autonomous. In the post-modern social order, when the autonomous cultural sphere is a thing of the past, the free-floating sign or the culture itself drops down to the world and instead of disintegrating spreads over the whole area to engender a situation where culture is synonymous with social life.

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Book Reviews

Salim Kemal and Ivan Gaskell (eds.), *Landscape, Natural Beauty and the Arts*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1995,pp.278, Paperback ISBN 0521 558549

The anthology contains eleven essays that focus the philosophical issue of interrelation between natural beauty and art, the issue which predominates an area of contemporary aesthetics. "At present",write the editors, "natural beauty is so riddled with conception derived from painting and poetry that landscape refers ambiguously to parts of nature and representation of nature in paintings, photographs and film". Ernst Gombrich, the noted British arthistorian, has argued that in the history of painting representation of actual or geographical landscape was preceded by the paintings' imaginary invention of landscapes, and later in the eighteenth century artistic categories were read into nature. There are two major questions with which aesthesticians are concerned now: can art and nature be experienced on a comman aesthetical ground,and secondly, on the same ground, can enviroment be aestheticized ? Aesthetics is interpreted in its original Greek sense: any sensuous perception. In this connection Kant is preferred to Hegel who defined aesthetics as a philosophical discipline that examines the beauty of art and not of nature. Kant had said earlier, "Nature is beautiful because it looks like art and art can only be called beautiful if we are conscious of it as art while yet it looks like nature". Today Arnold Berleant, an Amercian philossopher is a leading advocate for this Kantian view. He pleads that apprecation of nature and art follows a common method and aesthetics can accommodate both nature and art on equal terms.

T.J.Diffey in his essay "Natural Beauty without Metaphysics" does not of course side with any group, but expresses his dissatisfaction with the notion of beauty offered by different metaphysicians: "beauty as the object of bioligical or sexual interest; beauty disinterested appreceiation of a rational mind; and an idealist rating of art above beauty in importance".He asserts that the fact that nature is beautiful is too common an experience to need any philosophical justification. He thinks that the aesthetic issues about art have their sources in aesthetic issues about nature; and we understand the aesthetic beauty through an understanding of a natural beauty. But the major observation by Aristotle remains unanswered : how to contradict his view that the ugly in nature appears beautiful in art? The specific beauty of art lies with representational quality. Nobody denies beauty of nature - whatever that phenomenon may be. But one regrets with justification that a common aesthetics for accommodating both art and nature cannot be accepted. There may, however, be two different aesthetical systems for art and nature.

Donald Crawford is wise to avoid the issue of a common aesthetics and agrees for the possibility of comparison between aesthetic beauty and natural beauty on two grounds: first the organic unity principle common in both nature and art as observed by the classical thinkers as well as the modern formalists through Hegel; and secend, the contextualist view of expressiveses of both art and nature which the environmentalist upholds. Both are expressive in their own context—art in its cultural context and natural beauty in its environmental context. If aesthetics is a principle for appreciating and juding beauty, then there cannot be a common principle for judging these two different phenomana. Comparison is, however, possible even between two dissimilar things. But there are certainly some common features between art and nature on which they can be rationally compared.

Authors have approached the concept of nature from historical,political and religious perspectives. Allen Carlson proposes a scientific construal of nature. He argues that the notion of appreciation involves the notion of aesthetic attitude; and since attitude is a suggestive phenom-

enon, attitude-based appreciation seems to be limited in scope. To appreciate something aesthetically is to appreciate it as and for "what it is, and not another thing". Carlson thinks that appreciation of design and order is the paradigm of art appreciation, although this appreciation varies with regard to the nature of the artwork that makes distinctive demands of the viewer's physical and psychical capacities. Consequently, Carlson now turns to the point observed by Crawford: appreciation of order and design in art stands closer to the appreciation of nature along the lines of clasical thinkes as well as of Hegel's. It is the scientific account of nature rather than the mythical, mystical, poetic and religious ones which plays the crucial role in the aesthetic appreciation of nature. Arnold Berleant, rejecting any comparison between the exeperience of art and that of nature, advocates consistently what he has already done in his earlier works, for a single theroy of aesthetic experience that would accommodate both art and nature on the same terms.

The volume is not intended to offer any final solution to the problems concerned with the nature of art and environment with their similarities and dissimilarities, and with the possibility of a monist or pluralist mode of expreience of both these phonomena. The chief merit of the book lies in its exibition of the wide ranging area that our reflection on the interrelationship of art and nature covers. Each essay provokes our rethinking of what we knew earlier opening at the some time before us a number of choices for our free and unprejudiced consideration.

B.C. Nath

Ellen Dissanayake, *Homo Aetheticus :* Where Art comes from and Why?, University of Washington Press edition, paperback, 1995 (First published by the Free Press,1992), PPXXII+297

Ellen Dissanayake has been consistantly promoting, since her publication of *What is Art For* ? in 1988, an ethological view of art,i.e., art is a necessary human behaviour : "Viewing the species Homo Sapiens as it evolves and expresses a behaviour of art is a way of understanding ourselves and the modest *condition humans.* " She has been pursuasively claiming that our sense of beauty has a biological justification and art evolved as a human behaviour necessary for the survival of this species—art's principal need has been to make such importaant social activities as rituals and ceremonies memorable and pleasurable, and as such man's need for art has been ultimately a social need, for promoting group solidarity and a cultural identity. She acknowledges that such a view of art is based on the scientific discoveries of the Harvard entomologist Edward Wifson incorporated by her revelations of direct experience in the Third World Indian subcontinent, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea. It is interesting to note that her findings combine the Western scientific analyses with the Eastern mystic revelations particularly, the way she has juxtaposed two photographs on page 57 *(What is Art For)*, an Indian bride with a tattoed Japanese—makes her points clear that man's love for ornaments and colours are not cultural (learnt) rather biological (in born)- far a man it is something "species entrie". Here, an Indian reader remembers Kalidasa's famous observations that ornamentation does not constitute a beautiful form; the reverse is rather the truth - it is a beautiful form that justifies the use of ornaments. An Indian bride in her ritual costume (not only the ornaments, even the typical look, gestures with half-lifted veil and the typical mysterious smile) is more a piece of art than any natural being, asthetically expressive no less than any painting of any artist in the world. Hence artworld should not be confined only to the institution or media, nor is the artwork any finished artifact that is accepted by such institutions as a work of art. As artwork has been an "unravished bride" because of its emotional appeal, a value which has made the survival of human beings possible throughout their long course of evolution. Homo Sapiens is also homo aestheticus . Man is not simply a wise animal, he is also an aesthetic animal. In tracing the biological origin of art Dissanayake rejects Duchamp's view that "Art has no biological source".

Dissanayake writes, "*Homo Astheticus* explores the ways in which humans are inherently aesthetic and artistic creatures." The book under review is a sequel to her *What Is Art For* and she rightly thinks that both the titles are complementary.

Like language, art is a *natural* human behaviour, but as the differences in *Parole*, so to say, is a matter of cultural impositin so also "arts and related aesthetic attitudes vary so widely from one society to another would seem to suggest that they are wholly learned or 'cultural' in origin rather than.... also biological in nature"..."art can be regarded as a natural, general proclivity that manifests itself in culturally learned specifics such as dances, songs, performances, visual display and poetic speech". There are three critical keys to understanding where art comes from and why: (I) individuals and cultures vary concerning what they practice and revere, (ii) the inherent tension between the *natural* (the given) and the cultural (humanly imposed) and (iii) the attraction humans specifically find in the unusual and extraordinary phenomena (P.XII). The author then is convinced that "contemporary art and contemporary life can best be regarded not from the prospect of philosophy, sociology, history, anthropology, psychology or psychoanalysis - in their moden or postmodern forms - but within the long view of human biological evolution." (P.XII).

Dissanayake is fed up with jargonised thinking of both the traditions modernism and postmodernism. Since she sincerely feels that the advocates of these traditions have consistently tried to remove art from its intimacy with human life itself ; i.e., the vary fact that art as a biological need provides the reason for living itself to cultivate what is called "aesthetic experience" is the only purpose of human life - neiher to "end art" nor to "end aesthetic experience.". Dickie and Danto are therefore spared in favour of Berenson, Bell and Puskin.

Similarly, Dissanayake is couragious enough to express her utter dissatisfaction with the debates that are going on in the postmodernist critical parlours. If the pre-Derrtidean Western culture suffered from logocentrism then the post-Derridean culture suffers from seriptocentrism which terribly tends to destroy human sensibility. The reactionary anti-colonialism wing of poststructuralism, in spite of its genuine struggle for erasing the hege-mony of Western culture as a whole, cannot save humanity from the rapid decline of the very reason of its origin, existence and continuity. The author's advice to turn away from the scriptomaniac "language-mediated-ideology" to "stones, water, weather, the loving work of human hands, the expressive sounds of human voices, the immense, mysterious and eternal" sounds absolutely prophetic. *Homo Asestheticus* , is a bold and timely venture in restoring art as the very symbol of human existence as well as of its continuity into an unending future.

Gohn K.Grande, *Balance: Art and Nature* Black Rose Books Ltd, Montreal ete., 1994,PP.250

One of the most dangerous implications of the institutional theory of art has been that it has ruthlessly legitimatized the collusion of media, commercial organizations and cultural and administrative bureaucracies rather than genuine art critics and audience in both appreciating and evaluating the art works and their artists.

One can imagine the fatal consequence of adjudicating the aesthetic merit of a artwork in terms of its commercial value. Contemporary internationalism of the artworld is mostly a commercial phenomenon and is often an aesthetic hoax rather than a sign of genuine creativity. In Grande's view, a genuine work of art must represent/express humanity's relation to nature, the environment we live in. Like Gregory Currie (*An Ontology of Art*,1989), as against Goodman, he acknowledges "the origins and limits to materials, cultural specificity and the contest in which one works" as essential ingredients for an artwork. According to him, as man himself, art is also a part of nature and nature is not "mere matter to be manipulated, transposed and reformed in order to affirm our

superiority over nature". He therefore rejects the nature-art dichotomy so strongly advocated by artists and critics as Marcel Duchamp. Arthur Danto and Theodor Adorno.

The problem that disturbs the ecological thinkers today is man's conceit in mishandling nature even destroying nature in the name of recasting it for his so-called welfare or privileged existence. As a consequence the severe damage caused to environment by man's attitude such as this, has now sufficiently warned him that this attitude, if continues any longer, will remove human civilization in no time. Therefore, not only scientists aestheticians, artists and philosophers should also wisely modify their ideas of and attitude to nature before it is too late. Aristotle's definition of art as imitation of nature has provoked a sense of man's creative inferiority to nature, therefore serious attempts have been made to either reject the concept of imitation altogether or to reinterpret it as a copy not of any finished product of nature but of the very creative spirit of nature. But how to ignore the origins of human creativity in nature itself ? Grande has very wisely appealed to Friedrich Kiesler's theory of "correalism", "the mutual inter-dependence of organisms", "the dynamics of continual inter-actions between man and his natural and technological environments" for a total revision in our thought pattern regarding the relationship of man with nature in creation of the arts.

Grande repeats his conviction in several of his essays collected in this book: "We must rediscover nature's place in human culture at large if the world is to survive and prosper." (p.77) "Nature must remain the model on which the forms for the future are built." (P.93). And in his appreciation of the artists like Anish Kapoor, Andy Goldsworthy, Armand Vaillancourt and James Carl Grande synthesizes his aesthetic experience into a theoretical model which he puts succinctly in his essay "Outside, History, Inside, Nature":

> As we approach the end of the 2nd millennium, it is more evident than ever that our traditional Western approach to art must come to an end. Our extensive dependence on the syntax of our art, its structural basis, is indeed a weakness and not, finally, a strength. It is possible that we can replace it with a more subtle but longer lasting vision of art whose main premise is its silent integration into a built or natural environment. This approach would, out of necessity, require a greater exploration of the driving forces behind our unconscious; of our biological origins and our endemic relation to nature. An art of the future may also represent a modest integration of Eastern and Western values of what art is or could be. Our art and architecture could be revivified if we realize the volatile, endlessly changing characteristics of all materials in nature, both organic and inorganic. All act according to natural laws should be as important to the artists as to the pure scientist. Art can play a leading role in guiding our society towards a regenerative, intuitive vision of the life process. Our connectedness to nature is part of a holistic energy of life, which is both etherial and physical. If our artists can understand this process more fully in a sensitized way, then we can cast aside the appropriative models and structural layerings of today's art.

Grande's ideas and style both are fresh, sincere, intuitive, lively and impelling enough to recast the common run of aesthetical thinking in contempary academic programmes.

Arnold Berleant, *The Aesthetics of Environment,* Temple University Press, Philadelphia,1992,PP.XIV+218.

One immediately agrees with the author that although the new field of knowledge called environmental aesthetics is an international and multi-disciplinary phenomenon—a convergence philosophy, cultural geography and anthropology, environmental design, horticulture, agriculture, city planning and architecture - it is never mererly a derivative area of knowledge. As an autonomous discipline with its own problems and principles it deals with regional and international environmental policies and problems and makes the public aware of environmental crises as well as of

the aesthetic values of /in environment. But it is difficult to agree with the author that "all aesthetic is, in some sense, applied". As it is understood, aesthetics is a cognitive science or activity that determines the nature of beauty in both nature and man-made arts as also determines beauty as an emotional value immensely significant for human culture. On the other hand,when the principles of this coguitive science applied in evaluation of particular artworks or the beauty of any natural phenomenon, the function might be called criticism—inevitablely an evaluative activity."Applied aesthetics" as the contemporary Finnish thinkers have coined the phrase, refers to that branch of human activity which deliberately applies aesthetic principles, i.e., the principles of beauty as an emotional value to the areas and activities of man which are normally non-emotional, related to the practical aspects of human life such as weaving clothes, constructing houses, making vehicles, addressing an audience for political purpose otherwise and manners, customs and behaviour in general. In other words, applied aesthetics might mean beautification of human life as a whole. Considered in this light emvironmental aesthetics is a part of applied aesthetics. But this does not mean to say that applied aesthetics tends to erase the age-old difference between mimetic(fine) and productive (craft) arts. That's a different critical debate which one should carefully avoid here.

From Aristotle to Marcel Duchamp art has been considered superior to natural phenomena, and obviously art and nature are antonyms implying that only art carries aesthetic value whereas nature/environment does not. With the exception of the romantics environment has always been regarded something passive, an inanimate background for human life which seldom plays any significant role in man's survival and elevation. But man has now realised the devastating result of this attitude to his environment, and Berleant's central strategy for providing a prophetic direction for saving humanity from this ensuing annihilation is "to reconceptualize environment and recognize its aesthetic implication" so that the environment-bride will remain unravished, "We are coming to realize that", he writes, "nature is not alien to the human world nor is environment an external territory. Aesthetics can help us grasp, in both theoretical terms and concrete situations, the inseparability of the human and the natural... We discover in the aesthetic perception of environment the reciprocity, indeed the confirmity of forces in our world—those generated by human action and those to which we must respond. And we find in their ultimate identity not only the qualitative directness of experience but the immediacy of our engagement. Environmental aesthetics as theory and as experience, can help us achieve a truer sense of the human condition." (P.XIII)

Berleant works out his project in twelve chapters. Although one may not agree with his statement that everything has an aesthetic dimension and an aesthetic dimension is inherent in every experience of everything—which may sound extremist from the Western point of view— Berleant finds strong support from the ancient Indian tradition particularly from the Kashmirian Saiva Philosophers of the 9th and 10th centuries. His holistic and phenomenoligical concept of nature,—"this last sense of nature, which does not differentiate between the human and the natural and which interprets everything as part of a single, continuous whole corresponds to the largest idea of environment....Environment, as I want to speak of it, is the natural process as people live it, *however* they live it. Environment is nature experienced, nature lived.") is parallel to the Sankhya-yoga concept of Prakrti (Nature). Berleant's idea of an aesthetics of engagement as opposed to a contemplative appreciation of beauty has also been explained in the light of Indian aesthetics in my essay "Aesthetics beyond/within Aesthetics" published in the volume XVIII of this journal. Environmental aesthetics interpreted as an anticolonial phenomenon suggesting "deep political changes away from hierararchy and its exercise of power and toward community, where people freely engage in naturally fulfilling activities. It implies a human family order that relinquishes authoritarian control

and encourages cooperation and reciprocity. It leads toward acceptance, friendship, and love that abandon exploitation and possessiveness and promote sharing and mutual empowerment." (P.13)

Berleant's observations are not evidently confined to the aesthetics of environment, i.e., experiencing only environment aesthetically. His is a large scale programme for a radical revolution in our world view—aesthetification of human life as a whole–perhaps contributing to the ideas of Ellen Dissanayake's homo aestheticus from a different angle. What is prominent in all these writers is a view that aesthetics neither is nor should be simply a speculative science, just another intellectual luxury item meant for academic syllabus or drawingroom debate, it is an urgent need for common people who should participate in and therefore carefully reconstruct and preserve the beauty of environment which they experience as an integrated and vital part of it. This is also "descriptive aesthetics" as different from the traditional "substantive aesthetics".

The book is a landmark in the recent aesthetical thinking. Keeping carefully away from the popular intellectual debates of the present decade, the author feels sincerely concerned with man's spiritual enhancement, and what he offers is an humble suggestion for self-elevation rather than any jargonic rigor for futile exercise of conceit and snobbery.

A.C.Sukla

Richard Eldridge (Ed.), *Beyond Representation* : Philosophy and Poetic Imagination, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1996 (ISBN 0-521-4807- 9-5) PP.306.

The editor collects eleven essays and contributes an introduction setting up the theoretical basis common to all the essays he collects: "Each of the essays that are collected here moves broadly in the orbit of the Kantian–Hegelian conception of the human subject as a subject of and in *poiesis.* They track various modes—often themselves involving gender, class position, and national tradition—of the uncovering and exercise of human poetic powers creatively to envision a just and free culture, drawing on, but also against the gain of, forms of cultural life that are already in place. At the same time, these essays follow out moments of self-interrogation and self-criticism in the uncovering and exercise of poetic powers, moments in which the very sense that one possesses these powers is blocked by an awareness of the force of antagonisms in culture, present and foreseealde. In each essay there is a pronounced emphasis on the priority of the process of the continual...of subjects and their culture over the completed and substantial nature of the subjects and the cultures that are thus refigured...the writers of these essays participate in just the antagonistic logic of always refigurative self-consciousness that they are undertaking to describe." (P.14)

As the title of the anthology suggests, the theoretical unity that blends these essays together presupposes that the poetic imagination is a human faculty that transcends the representational function of mind, language and society—transcends the notion,Cartesrian in origin, that out of a critical theory of representations philosophy would derive a critical theory of culture—the notion which impelled the thinkers of the 17th, 18th and the logical atomists and logical positivists of the 20th century to consider the task of philosophy as providing a critical theory of representations of the world. Instead, against the Cartesian conceptions of a "punctual subject", it is now proposed to conceive of the human subject a subject of and within *poiesis* - the term and concept as used by Plato and Aristotle, for opposing the concepts of *logos/theoria/praxis/episteme/poiesis,* means *mimesis* , i.e., making of any *imitative representation,* not merely making something unreal or fictitious, but also communicating emotions and feelings. Thus *mimemata* , the products of *poiesis* , such as representations of appearances, moods, characters moral and political interests and action and their meanings are all significant for human life. The editor endorses the Kantian notion of human subjects—subjects in and through *poiesis* as it is recently propounded by Philippe Lacoue Labarthe and Jean-Lue Nancy in their work *The Literary Absolute: The Theory of Literature in*

German Romanticism (The English translation SUNY Press 1988). According to them, poetic practice is not controlled by the movements of material nature, is not arbitrarily conventional, nor does reflect only brute external realities of power, but instead is a "practice in and through which possibilities of free human cultural activity are recalled, envisioned and criticized." Poetic practice is an eternal process of human *Bildung* a process in which the subject is caught up continually seeking to become unified and free from the bondage of any cultural routines. Poetic *Bildung* is therefore deeper than and/or logically prior to any epistemological testing of already formed representations for correspondence to reality or for coherence. This *Bildung* or *poiesis* may be compared to Adorno's notion of *open thinking*.

Representation ceases to be a term connoting second presentation or presenting again. It should be understood as to render something present (P.292), Charles Altieri rejects both the "aesthetic ideology"/ the hedonistic approach as well as the recent political approach to art and instead prefers Longinus' view of art as a "work of articulation"- a movement from potentiality to actuality and not simply a representation or reproduction of what already exists. Thus poiesis is, in Hegel's view, self's ongoing refiguration/projection of itself (elaborated by J.M.Bernstein's essay). Arthur Danto, a noted anti-Cartesian, according to whom the human subject is that which comes to its representational conscionsness and self-consciousness only in and through its formed social world and a work of art is that which invents "modes of embodying meanings she or he may share with communities" demands that "philosophers should be encouraged to speak in their own voice about the world that means something to them. The freer the voice, the better the philosophy." (P.105) Lacoue -Labarthe and Nancy, following Friedrich Schlegel, interpret Aristotle's idea of *opsis* not as spectacle with its visual paradigm (since Aristotle observes that the aim of tragedy, i.e., catharsis of pity and fear, is accomplished even by reading the text aloud) but as the *scene*, the place of the continual coming-to-be of the subject.

Some of the essays, particularly the last one by Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy deviate from the common run of critical style of neutrality, and the editor, though admits that they might be misunderstood or suspected by certain "materialist cast of mind", nevertheless justifies these envisionings as the free expresion of subjectivity in its continual enacted-enacting process which is the very goal of poetic imagination that goes far beyond the world of Cartesian representation. The anthology makes the reader aware of a resurgence of romanticism in its new garb. Once again Hegel and Sehlegel lead the critical community tending to push back the materialist definition of culture and human subject by their slogan for a continual unfolding of consciousness as the only way of cultural liberation.

B.C. Dash

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